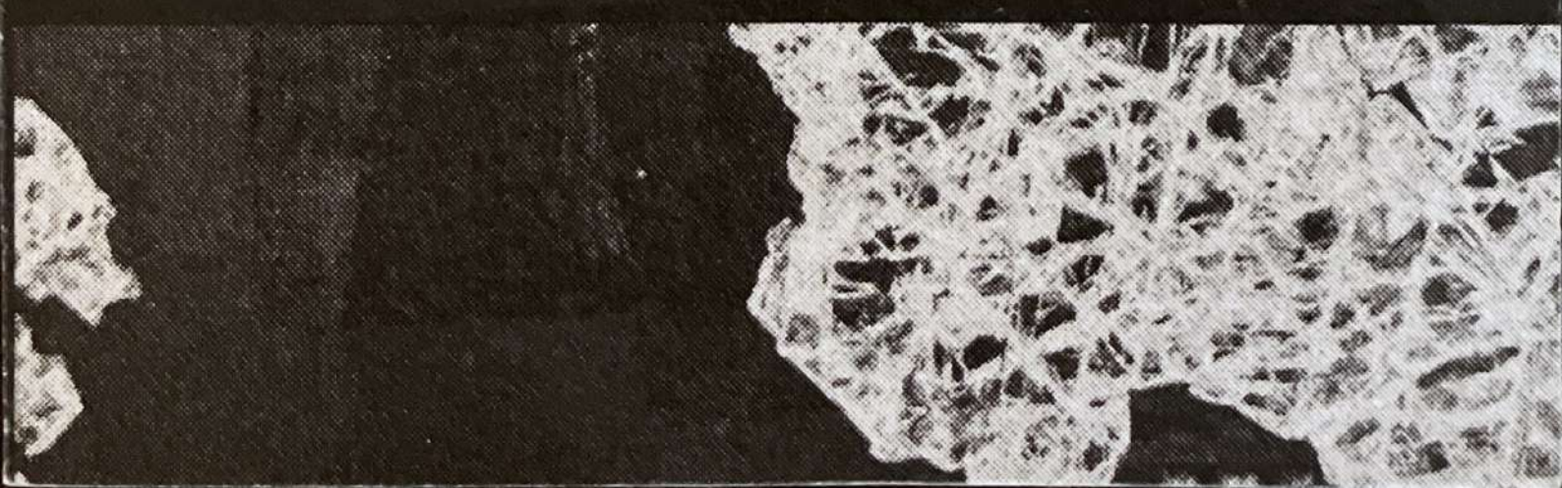
# EVERYONE TO THE STREETS

## Texts and Communiques from the Greek Uprising



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## Texts and Communiqués from the Greek Uprising

Published by a few people in and
around 56a Infoshop
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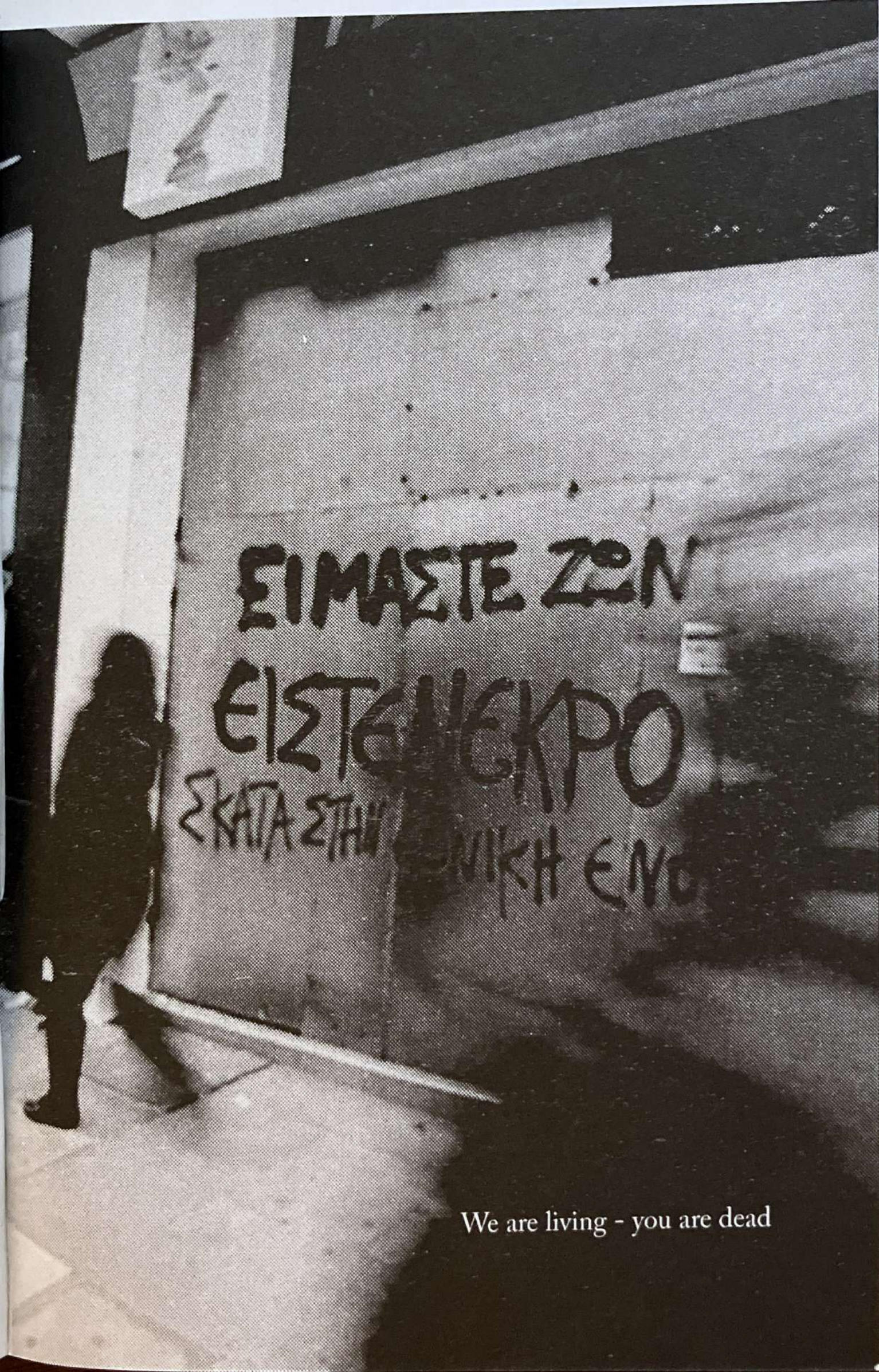


We are living - you are dead

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ΤΟ ΟΡΓΑΝΩΣΗ ΕΡΓΑΤΩΝ

# What next?

From this end of Europe the uprising in Greece took everyone by surprise. Riots in response to cop murders are not so unusual, but the response to the fatal shooting of Alexis Grigoropoulos on 6th December 2008 rapidly developed into a much wider movement which expressed itself in an incredible variety of activities, from looting shops and attacking police stations to occupying TV and radio stations, and led to a general questioning of many different aspects of capitalist society by the revolting proles.

Not only did the insurgents take action but they also took the trouble to express their actions in words, with a blizzard of leaflets, communiqués, articles and analysis, some of which are collected here. This "publishing" effort was itself a major aspect of the movement – an outpouring of anger, a call to action, a counter to capitalist media lies and a contribution to discussion of the way forward.

Texts by insurgents are not just enjoyable to read, they are the principal means by which past struggles are remembered, interpreted, and, hopefully, learnt from. Sadly, struggles which don't leave much text are often forgotten.

The sort of questions we always ask ourselves about any large-scale movement are:

- What was it really about?
- What were the attitudes and opinions of the participants?
- To what extent was it a response to local issues and to

what extent was it a response to universal concerns?
- Are the methods used something which can be generalised?
- Could it happen here?

But the question we should always ask ourselves when we are involved in any kind of struggle is: "what next?" We occupy a factory, a school, a town hall... But, then what? We drive the cops off the street... And then? By looking at movements which have gone a bit further than usual we can perhaps begin to answer this question too.

Detailed information about how the movement progressed is set out in the chronologies contained in this collection, but it's worth making a few very broad observations about what happened and why it's important.

The media were right about one thing... The confrontations were begun by a political subculture ("anarchists", "anti-authoritarians") who saw the cops as having killed one of their comrades. The initial sites of the clashes with the cops were the places where the anarchist scene in Greece is strong – the centres of Athens and Thessaloniki, but also, for example, Chania in Crete – and people from this milieu played an important role in organising actions and taking initiatives throughout the period of mass insurgency. But the clashes, demonstrations and occupations quickly spread way beyond the anarchist scene because of the widespread horror at the cops killing someone who was only 15, the general discontent of the working class over their conditions of life and the complete lack of legitimacy

of mainstream politics. The movement drew in secondary school students, university students, young workers and the unemployed. There was a high level of participation by migrants (particularly Albanians), creating the first "multinational" riots in recent Greek history.

Police repression was largely ineffectual in front of the movement on the streets. In the early days the police used gangs of fascists on a few occasions to try to intimidate the protesters but the sheer size of the crowds rendered this tactic inoperable and the police had no real strategy for breaking up the crowds themselves. In the end they almost entirely relied on tear gas – firing off something like a thousand canisters a day during the first few days of clashes.

In addition to the fierce rioting, occupations of convenient buildings began almost immediately - the National Technical University, the Faculty of Economics and the Faculty of Law were occupied on the day Alexis was killed. There was much more to come... Within a week seven hundred secondary schools and a hundred universities were occupied or simply abandoned. There were also occupations of town halls and other municipal buildings. In addition, trade union offices were occupied, such as the journalists' union (ESIEA) in Athens to denounce media lies, and a union centre in Thessaloniki in solidarity with Konstantina Kuneva. Both in the streets and in the occupations, the insurgents created communities of struggle. There was a widespread urge to overcome individual isolation.

The movement was neither crushed or recuperated. It

ran out of steam, presumably because the Greek insurgents themselves could not answer the question "what next?", and also because it remained a minority proletarian movement which could not be immediately generalised. Naturally, groups of activists tried to keep things going but the movement was essentially over by mid-January.

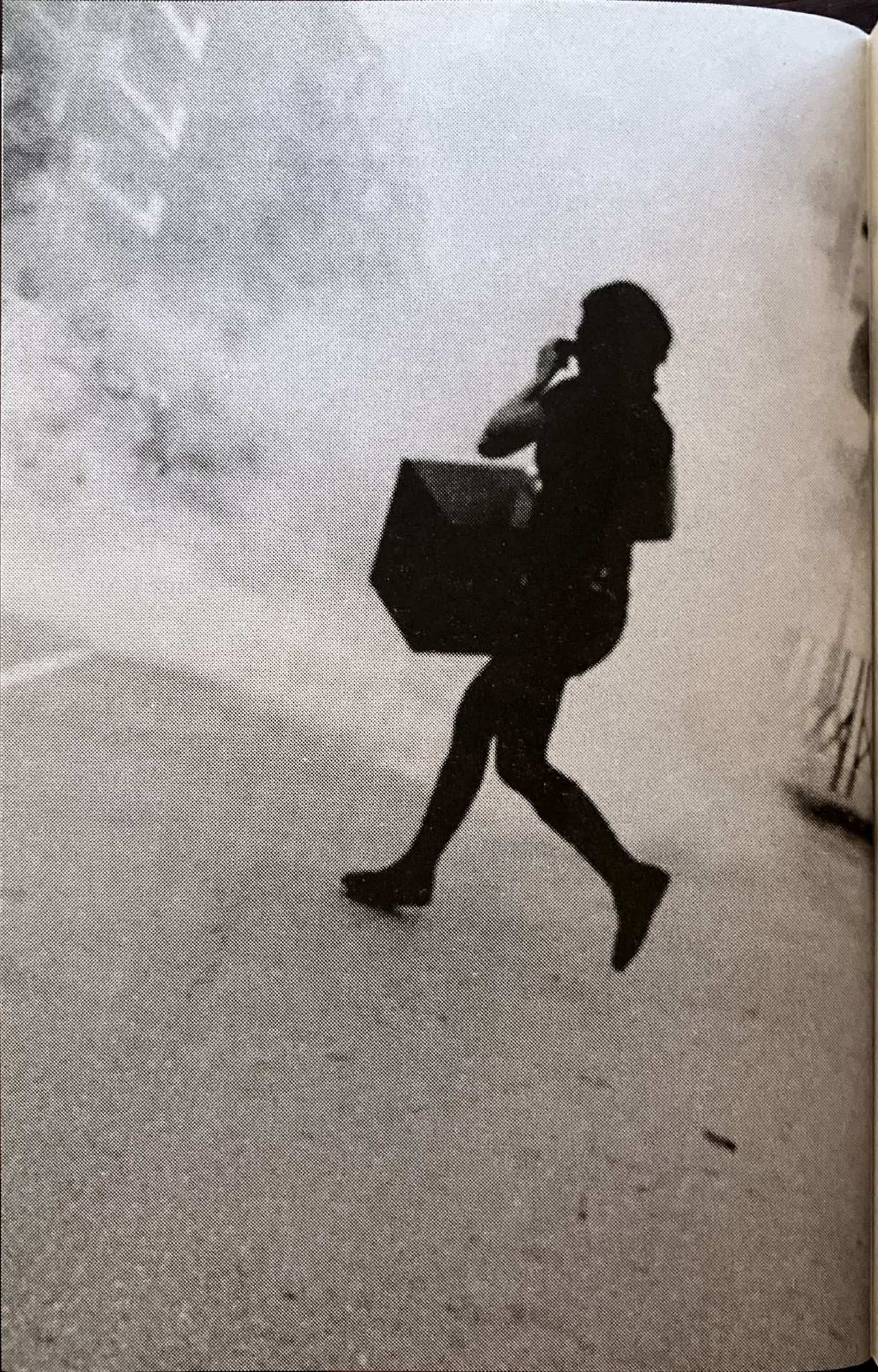
Hardly any political demands were raised (even against the cops). Almost the only "demands" were those aimed at other proletarians – "Everybody to the streets!" This made the movement difficult to divert into political channels – the specialists in negotiation simply had nothing to negotiate about. Only a few leftists put forward demands for things like the resignation of the government or the disarming of the cops.

An obvious weakness of the movement is that it had very little direct effect on the world of work, apart from the disruption of production and circulation in the centre of Athens because the riots created a chaotic situation. When workplaces such as colleges and town halls were occupied it was because they were convenient places to initiate other subversive activities rather than an attempt to disrupt a process of capitalist production. There were no strikes (apart from one by teachers on the day of the murdered student's funeral) directly connected with the movement. Partly this can be explained by the class composition of the riots and Greek society in general (see the TPTG text "The rebellious passage..."), particularly the prevalence of small workplaces. However this does not mean that the movement had nothing to do with workers. Many insurgents were wage workers themselves, but it was not possible for them to do

something in their workplaces. There was widespread agitation and direct action in support of Konstantina Kuneva, a migrant cleaner and trade union activist who was viciously attacked by company goons. This included demands for the abolition of the subcontracting system which so many women migrant cleaners are subjected to and physical attacks on the companies which make use of it. There was also widespread discussion during the occupations about issues related to work, not least about the role of the trade unions and their increasing irrelevance in the face of the growing insecurity and casualisation of more and more categories of workers. However, it has to be said that this critique was mostly limited to condemning "bureaucratic" trade unionism, and there were many activists who still wanted to promote rank-and-file unionism.

We can assume that, thanks to the experiences lived by many younger workers in December, the next wave of strikes in Greece won't be so passive and union controlled as they have been in the past, but what about the rest of Europe... What about the rest of the world? What next?

The Editors
London
October 2009



# Part One

## Chronologies from Athens and Thessaloniki

# Athens

A detailed updated summary of the recent events in Athens, from the perspective of some proletarian participants.

A shooting by police on Saturday 6th of December 2008 has triggered off in cities all over Greece the fiercest riots in decades. What follows is a first –and incomplete– presentation of the recent riots in Athens based on our own experiences and on what we have heard of. On the one hand, the fierceness of the riots and the determination of the rioters and looters, and on the other hand, the unfolding strategy of the state, certainly need more time and closer attention to be adequately estimated, something that we are honestly not in the position to do at the moment, because we still participate in several local activities, demos and assemblies.

## Saturday, 6th of December

At about 9.10pm, a police special guard shot dead a 15-year-old boy, Alexis-Andreas Grigoropoulos, in cold blood, in a quite usual bickering near Exarchia Square. Immediately after that, lots of people –mainly anti-authoritarians– gathered in the area to find out what was going on and to express their rage against police brutality. Hundreds of policemen attempted to seal the area in order to suppress any reactions, but with no result. Spontaneously, people started to attack the police in the streets around the square with every means possible. In less than two hours, more than 10,000 people had taken to the nearby

streets to communicate the event and clash with the police. Some anarchist groups occupied the historical building of the National Technical University, which lies a few blocks away, and the Faculty of Economics, which is situated 1km away to use them as centres of struggle. The same was done by leftists at the Faculty of Law, less than 1km from the point where the murder took place. In this district, clashes with the police and attacks against banks and stores lasted until 4am, as far as we have witnessed.

The news concerning the murder spread rapidly to many people through mobile phones and the internet. As a result, about 150 people, who already were at Monastiraki Square, spontaneously attacked and looted almost all the stores at Ermou Street, the world's 11th most posh street. There, lots of passers by joined in from nearby pubs and clubs. In the centre of Athens that night, some people attacked the police station near the Acropolis causing severe damage.

It has to be noted that the news concerning the murder of the young boy immediately spread to several cities (Thessaloniki, Ioannina, Irakleio, Volos) where attacks against banks, police stations and stores also took place.

## Sunday, 7th of December

The Faculty of Law squat called for a demonstration at 2pm outside the Archaeological Museum which is right next to the squatted historical building of the National Technical University in Patission Avenue. Many people gathered and at

about 3.30pm the demo towards the Athens police headquarters begins. We already knew that the police would never let us approach their headquarters, but we were determined to arrive as close as we could. Bank-smashing and stone-throwing against the cops started immediately after we had left the square. As we turned right to Alexandras Avenue standing at the end of the demo, we realized that the participants amounted to approximately 4000 people, of all ages. There were attacks against every store in sight, mainly luxury car showrooms and banks. At the beginning, police stood at a safe distance from the rioters and didn't let themselves become a target. Then, as they came closer, the rioters attacked them mainly with stones. The police made a first attempt to break the demo with tear gas near Argentina Square, but with no result. After ten minutes, at the corner with Ippokratous street, they made a second fiercer attempt with lots of tear gas which finally proved successful: the demo broke into several parts and its main parts headed to the right towards Neapoli. Attacks against stores and banks kept going on, also accompanied by car-smashing. Lots of people chose to keep on marching towards the police headquarters by a parallel street, but after some time it became clear that there was no way through: a small street perpendicular to Alexandras Avenue is the spot where the already famous photo with the gun-holding riot policeman was taken. Tension was high. We decided to move back and return to Exarchia Square to see what was to be done next. On the way back, clashes with the police were still taking place but to a lesser extent. Some people attacked the 5th police station which is located nearby and the police responded with plastic bullets.

Later in the evening, clashes with the police, and to a lesser extent attacks against stores, began again around the National Technical University and the Faculty of Economics, which would last until late that night.

## Monday, 8th of December

In the morning, youths from several secondary schools gathered spontaneously in front of the Police Headquarters to protest. Many youths from the northern, east and western suburbs moved to the city centre making a spontaneous demo. Youths from the schools of Pireaus (a port at the south-west part of the city) attacked the central police station overturning police cars.

At 6pm, the Faculty of Law squat called for a demonstration at Propylaia, a central Square of Athens. Our estimation is that more than 20,000 people, mainly young people, participated in that demo. Lots of them, maybe more than 1500, were walking "in and out" of the demo smashing banks and destroying the luxurious shops of the city centre. They started to destroy or loot the commodities almost from the first moment of the demo. The youths destroyed banks at Omonoia square and attacked more than half of the shops of Stadiou Avenue and Filellinon Avenue. Also, severe looting took place at the shops in the first blocks of Piraeus Avenue. People were walking slowly and nobody really tried to stop either the attacks or the looting. Some even stood by and cheered the attacking youths. At the same time, youths were also attacking the cops, the banks and the shops in various parts of the city all the way down to Syggrou Avenue, a street leading to the south of Athens. Up until now, the real extent

of the damage caused to private property that night has not been estimated. The media says it amounts to 10 billion euros, which could be true since dozens of stores were attacked, looted or burnt down mainly by Greek and migrant "uncontrollable youths".

Although one could say that the Greek youths (students and precarious workers) had the initiative and the migrants followed by, we have to admit that it was very difficult to distinguish the one from the other in the streets. As far as migrants are concerned, Albanians of second generation participated mostly in the attacks against cops and buildings and migrants of other origin –mostly Afghans and Africans- confined themselves to looting. Riots and looting covered approximately half of the city centre. Although the police made several arrests that evening, it would be untrue to say that they could even think of controlling the situation, because there were so many people in the streets, acting in small groups of ten or twenty people.

## Tuesday, 9th of December

Teachers of primary and secondary education went on strike that day against police brutality. At noon, the demonstration began from Propylaia Square and headed towards the Parliament, but there were no more than 3000 participants. After the end of the demo, and despite the fact that they were small in number, 150 youths hurled firebombs, rocks and other objects at riot police.

The so-called Communist Party (KKE), scared by the prospect of a generalised riot, showed once more its counter-revolutionary, reactionary nature. They declared the rioters and looters as secret agents of 'foreign dark forces' and called the 'people's movement', an imaginary subject of which they are supposedly the rightful representatives, to stay away from the fight. History repeats itself: for the last 35 years this party has been chanting the same, monotonous and dangerous mantra about 'provocateurs'; in 1973 they had done the same against the students and workers who had occupied the National Technical University; a riot that had led to the overthrow of the dictatorship. Once again, they are trying to save the state and restore public order.

At 3pm the funeral of the dead boy took place in the cemetery of Palaio Faliro, a suburb in the south of Athens. More than 5.000 gathered there to bid Alex the last goodbye and to shout once more against police murders. During the funeral, about 200 young people were involved in attacks against the riot police, who stood a few blocks nearby. This confrontation lasted for more than an hour, in the course of which some stores and banks were attacked; stones were also thrown against a police car. After an hour, young people headed towards the Palaio Faliro police station, but the police stopped them a few blocks away. During this riot, three police motor bikers shot more than ten times in the air to "scare" the rioters.

During the night, fascists appeared in the streets around the National Technical University and the Faculty of Economics where fierce clashes with the police were taking place. At Victoria Square, migrants attacked the police and tried to loot

3 stores, but undercover police and "civilians" brutally arrested one of them. Generally speaking, this was the day that the state unofficially pushed forward the so called "social automation" and encouraged the collaboration between shop owners, fascists, "civilians" and the police against the rioters.

## Wednesday, 10th of December

This day was a day of general strike, and its aim had been organised over a month before: it was mainly "against the state budget 2009". Due to the ongoing riots, the chief unionists spoke against police brutality, separating at the same time the "rioters" from the "responsible quiet demonstrators". More than 7000 people attended the gathering at Syntagma Square. Some protesters threw fire bombs at police during a general strike which paralyzed Greece and piled pressure on a doddering government.

Small scale riots took place at Panepistimiou Avenue. After the demo, many people attended the assembies at the National Technical University and the Faculty of Law to talk about what was going to be done in the next days. Later on, there was a big assembly of the anti-authoritarian milieu at the Faculty of Economics. Earlier in the morning, secondary students attacked the local police station in the suburb of Kaisariani. At night, clashes with the police took place at Tritis Septemvriou Avenue, in the centre of Athens.

The riots have spread to some 42 prefectures of Greece, even to towns where not even demos had taken place before.

The pattern is the same: mainly students and young people attack police stations, banks, stores and state buildings. They gather spontaneously, after communicating with each other over mobile phones. Anarchists and politicos are just a small part of the rioters and in many cases they are taken aback by the fierceness, the spreading and the duration of the riots.

It is mostly in Athens and Irakleio (Crete) that a big part of the rioters are migrants and so this riot can be rightfully called a multinational one, the first of this kind in Greece. Against this totally new situation, the media have tried to change their propaganda and talk of 'Greek protesters' and 'foreign looters', in an effort to flare up racism.

Up until now, about half of the arrested people in Athens are migrants and the main charge against them is looting. The vast majority of the arrested throughout the country are young people.

## Thursday, 11th of December

On Thursday, secondary students abandoned their schools and gathered outside police stations all over Athens. Some of them were attacked with rubbish bags and stones and the police threw tear gas and in some cases threw stones back. All in all 35 police stations were blockaded in Athens and at some places other people participated as well, mostly parents. The entrance of the prison in Korydallos was also attacked by students.

The media said that 4500 tear gas canisters have been used by the police these 5 days. They are running out of tear gas and thinking of importing some from Israel!

In the morning a group of libertarians occupied the Town Hall in Agios Demetrios, a suburb in the south of Athens. A lot of people from the neighborhood participated in the evening assembly and the municipal workers who supported the occupation issued a communiqué. The Town Hall has been used since then as a gathering place and a counter-information centre.

In several universities assemblies took place and university occupations spread. Militants from the student organization of the Communist Party (PKS) tried to block assemblies in order to prevent the occupations (Panteion University and School of Philosophy in the University of Athens). Their attempts were unsuccessful as occupations expanded throughout Athens and Greece.

Early in the evening there was a big demo (maybe 5000) in the centre of Athens called by an assembly of mainly leftist trade unionists and organizations who gather at the occupied Faculty of Law. At the end of the demo clashes with the police started in the centre of the city and around the occupied Faculty of Law which lasted for some hours.

In Komotini, a town in the north-east, near Turkey, a demo of mostly university students was attacked and chased into the university by many fascists and far right thugs who infest the area to protect national security.

There is a general feeling of hostility towards the cops and being fed up with everything. Police brutality in an increasingly police state after the 2004 Olympics, lousy wages and working

conditions, secondary student overwork and pressure, university students' discontent with a life that is increasingly characterised by insecurity and fear, government and church high officials' corruption, migrants' overexploitation and a society torn apart by deepening class divisions: a explosive mixture where the murder of a kid was just the fuse.

The publication of extracts from the testimony of the cop who murdered the kid caused general outrage. He 'accused' the student of having 'deviant behaviour' because 'he was expelled from the private school he was attending' (which is a lie, to say the least). His lawyer, a notorious TV celebrity, made an even more provocative statement: 'It is now only up to the Greek justice to decide whether the young boy was justly killed, or not'. The ballistic examination report was expected on that day. "Leaks" in the media the previous days suggested that the report will claim Alexandros was killed by a ricochet and not a direct shot (contradicting what every single eye witness says). However, such provocations are at least answered in the streets. Among other things, new imaginative slogans are invented every day: 'We did not throw stones; they were ricocheted', 'The right thing is for the lawyer to be killed by ricochet'.

## Friday, 12th of December

Seven hundred secondary schools and one hundred universities are occupied and their number is expected to jump up. A big student demo was called in Athens (10,000 or more). Students and other demonstrators attacked the police and some banks were smashed. During the demo two hundred anarchists

trashed the lawyer's office. The riot cops arrested several students (some of whom were 13-14 years old).

## Saturday, 13th of December

A sit-in was organised in Syntagma Square at noon by the coordinating committee of student university occupations as well as by political groups. More than 1000 people of all ages participated: university students and secondary school students as well as workers. The sit-in went on until the end of the night. After midnight the police attacked the peaceful protest with tear gas and dispersed the gathered crowd. Protests and demos were also organised in suburbs around Athens: Nea Smirni, Peristeri and Zografou.

In the evening the Ministry of Environment and Public Works in Patission Street was attacked by a crowd of two hundred people. At 9 o' clock about a thousand of people gathered in Exarchia to protest against the murder of Alexis-Andreas Grigoropoulos near the spot where he was murdered. Some people attacked the local police station whereas others clashed with the riot police. There was a demo heading for Monastiraki and Gazi, neighborhoods where many people go clubbing on Saturday night. The demo was attacked by the police and few people managed to continue. The conflicts went on in Exarchia but the attacks of the police forced the people to disperse into various directions. A large part of the crowd was pushed into the premises of National Technical University. Riots continued in the streets around National Technical University during the night.

People who managed to follow the demo passed from

Monastiraki, Thisseio, Gazi and then they tried to return to the centre marching on Piraeus Street. Some banks and surveillance cameras were attacked by the demonstrators. The police attacked the demo again near Omonia Square and there were more than 50 arrests. Those arrested were later released without any charges.

During the day several banks were attacked throughout Athens.

## Sunday, 14th of December

There were demos in several suburbs in Athens as well as in many cities and towns in Greece (Thessaloniki, Corfu, Volos, Xanthi etc). Earlier in the night, a peaceful demo at Syntagma Square called by bloggers was dispersed by the riot police with tear gas.

In the central square of Nea Smirni, a south-eastern suburb of Athens, a deserted big cafe called "Galaxias" owned by the municipality was occupied at noon by about a hundred people (anti-authoritarians, members of a municipal party and several residents) in order to be used as a counter-information and action coordination centre. The occupation of public buildings is a new form of struggle coming out of the riots. As we saw, it initially appeared in the suburb of Agios Demetrios, with the occupation of the town hall. The occupation of "Galaxias" adopted the name "Eleftheros Galaxias" (which means "Free Galaxy") and called for an open neighborhood assembly later in the afternoon.

During the day four radio stations were occupied. The radio

stations were used to broadcast statements and communiqués that called for the generalization of the insurrection.

In the afternoon, the Residents' Committee in Exarchia called for a rally at the spot where the murder of Alexis took place. In spite of the rain, a significant number of people participated and discussed the events in an open air assembly. When the riot police appeared, the people kicked them out by shouting and insulting them.

The mayor of Athens announced that the new Christmas tree in Syntagma square will be erected on Wednesday since the previous one was flared up by Molotov cocktails in the night of 8th of December. For the state, this tree symbolizes the consumerist spirit and the return to normality while for the insurgents its burning down means that the riot is still going on. Several attempts to set it on fire again have been taking place during demos so far.

## Monday, 15th of December

At 5a.m., the occupation of the old town hall of Halandri, a north-eastern suburb of Athens, was attacked by a handful of villains who allegedly had mafia connections with local shop owners. One of them forced the protesters to leave the building threatening them with a shotgun and a baseball bat. Nevertheless, the people managed to reoccupy the building after two hours.

In Agios Demetrios the popular assembly of the

occupation tried to cooperate with the municipal clerical workers in order to restart some municipal services without the mediation of the municipal authorities. The plan was to satisfy only urgent social needs, such as issuing green cards for the migrants as well as paying wages and extra allowances. The mayor and the municipal council intimidated the workers trying to prevent them from providing these services.

In the morning about a hundred secondary school students and a few workers and militants gathered outside the courts in Evelpidon Street to express their solidarity with those arrested during the clashes with the riot police the previous week. The youths entered the courts marching passed the security. At the same time a demo was organised in the suburb of Korydallos, by more than a thousand youths from nearby schools. The youths headed for Korydallos Prison (the biggest prison in the country) and attacked the police with rocks and firebombs. Elsewhere, in Pagrati district, secondary schools students demonstrated outside the police station. At noon, more than a thousand youths from local schools gathered outside the Police Headquarters in Alexandras Avenue and attacked the police with eggs, flour and rocks. Two students got arrested after being badly hit.

In the afternoon about 150 demonstrators participated in a musical demo at Propylaia Square. The demonstrators blocked Panepistimiou Avenue while singing and dancing but faced a fierce attack by the special police forces. At the same time about 100 people made an intervention in the underground metro station of Propylaia. Leaflets were distributed expressing a critique of the capitalist circulation of the labour power

commodity, calling for free transport for all and promoting the violation of zero tolerance policies inside metro stations. The intervention ended with a sabotage of all the vending machines, the writing of slogans on the walls of this sterilised environment and the spray-painting of surveillance cameras. Special police forces entered into the metro station and the merry participants attacked them verbally and made fun of them from the top of the stairs at the entrance of the station. At the same time, the same action took place in the metro station of Dafni, organised by the popular assembly of the occupied Town Hall of Agios Demetrios.

A huge banner was hung on the university building at Propylaia square depicting Kugias, the killer cop's lawyer, with the slogan 'Go ricochet yourself, you creep'. Shortly after the intervention at the metro station, a demo called by the assembly of the occupation of the Faculty of Law started from this square. About 2000 people participated in it heading for the Parliament and then they returned to Propylaia square.

In the suburb of Nea Filadelfia the municipal cultural centre was occupied in order to be used as a gathering place and a counter-information centre.

Occupations of municipal buildings and radio stations as well as university departments continued to spread throughout Athens and other cities.

On this day, representatives from 14 migrant communities issued a statement trying to keep their distances from the riots and the lootings in particular: 'We are not looters, migrants have public voice and dignity... We declare that the vast majority

of migrants are neither looters nor criminals'. Adopting a quite different stance, people from Athens' Haunt of Albanian Migrants distributed a leaflet at the student picket outside the police headquarters in the morning, declaring their class share in the riots, 'These days are ours, too'.

## Tuesday, 16th of December

A group of 50 people managed to enter the studios of NET, the national, state-run television channel and interrupted the 3pm news bulletin for about 1 minute. The cameras were turned to the protesters who carried banners calling for the "Immediate release of all the prisoners of the insurrection", "Freedom for all" as well as urging spectators to "Stop watching TV and go out in the streets".

At noon, a group of about 70 militants attacked the central police station of Ilissia which also serves as the headquarters of a unit of the special police forces (YMET). A police van and four police vehicles were burnt and 2 policemen were injured.

In the afternoon, gatherings and demos were organised in the suburbs of Petralona, Dafni and Agios Demetrios with the participation of secondary school students, workers and other residents. Also, about a thousand people gathered in Exarchia and marched towards the local police station where they were stopped by strong police forces.

The occupation of the Town Hall of Agios Demetrios ended with a demo of about 300 people.

In another part of the city centre, an intervention was organised at the metro station of Victoria Square in the afternoon. Vending machines were destroyed, slogans were written on the walls ("Let's bring the insurrection underground" was one of them) and surveillance cameras were spray painted.

## Wednesday, 17th of December

The central offices of the General Confederation of Labour of Greece (GSEE), at the junction of Patission and Alexandras Avenue, were occupied early in the morning by a group of about 70 workers. The aims of the occupation were described in the first communiqué of the occupation. About 50 bureaucrats with their thugs tried to evict the squatters at around 3pm but they were pushed back by the people with the help of squatters from the ASOEE occupation which is located nearby. An assembly was called at 6pm in the evening and was attended by 800 people.

From the beginning it was obvious that there were two tendencies inside the occupation –no matter how clearly articulated: a workerist one, that wanted to use the occupation symbolically in order to criticise the trade unionist bureaucracy and promote the idea of 'base unionism', independent of political influences; and a proletarian one, that wanted to attack one more institution of capitalist society, criticise trade unionism and use the place for the construction of one more community of struggle in the context of the general unrest. The leftist trade unionists that were present in the assembly did not really know what to do with all these insurgent workers and left.

In the morning, university students hung two giant banners on the Acropolis rock with slogans calling for mass demonstrations on 18th December across Europe and resistance. The workers at the archaeological site supported the action. In the previous days, the workers on the Acropolis were on strike because of a reduction of their wage due to a cut down of a special allowance. Later in the day the ministry promised to satisfy the demands of the strikers and the mobilization was suspended.

In the evening the occupation of the old Town Hall in Halandri organised a demonstration that headed for the police station. At least 400 people participated and attacked the police station with eggs, rocks, bottles etc; 30 minutes earlier, the same demo had thrown eggs and paint at the local Court of Justice. Another demo marched through the suburbs of Kesariani, Pangrati and Vironas. 300 people took part in it and headed for the police station where they engaged in short conflicts with the police. The demo then marched towards the Town Hall of Kesariani which was occupied for a few hours.

Sabotage of ticket vending machines and surveillance cameras was repeated in the evening at 5 metro stations: Attiki, Ano Patisia, Kato Patisia, Tavros and Monastiraki.

Another secondary school student was shot by unknown people at a youth meeting place in Peristeri, a western suburb of Athens. Fortunately, the student, whose father is a well known trade unionist and a member of the so-called Communist Party, was not seriously injured.

A bunch of professors (mainly teaching Law in Greek universities) launched an 'Appeal to the Government and the Political Entities' to take some measures against the 'ills' of Greek society stressing mostly the stricter use of the university asylum and the prosecution of the use of masks during demos. In this way, the intellectuals, although belated, tried to introduce the old Black Act[1] in Greece in 2008 updating its meaning against insurgents.

## Thursday, 18th of December

A demonstration began at noon from Propylaia Square, with the participation of secondary school students, university students, teachers and other workers. The base union of the couriers had called a one-day strike, whereas the union of the workers in bookstores and publishing houses had called a 5-hour work stoppage. The couriers formed their own block in the demo. Also the confederation of the unions of the public sector workers (ADEDY) had called a 5-hour work stoppage. This gave many workers the opportunity to participate independently in the demo. The number of the demonstrators was very high. Some estimate it was around 20,000. When the demo reached the Parliament, clashes with the riot police began. What the cops mainly did was to protect the newly-erected Christmas tree at Syntagma Square; they gathered around it, trying to prevent it

1 The Black Act was an Act of the UK Parliament passed in 1723 in response to the Waltham deer poachers and a group of bandits known as the 'Wokingham Blacks'. It made it a serious crime to appear armed in a park or warren, or to hunt or steal deer, with the face blackened or disguised. The Act was later amended to deal with protesters outside the royal forests and chases.

from getting burned by molotov cocktails hurled at it. It was such a ludicrous spectacle to watch that hundreds of demonstrators stood there shouting and mocking them. The true Christmas spirit: the Christmas tree (a plastic one, actually), the symbol of the happy consumerist, protected by the forces of law and order. The clashes spread to Panepistimiou Avenue, Akadimias Avenue and Solonos Street until evening. Several people were arrested, amongst them a soldier who was passing by and was badly hit by the cops.

After a similar demo in the city of Patras the local Workers' Centre was occupied by some demonstrators following the example of the occupation of GSEE.

An anti-racist demo with a few hundred people was organised in the afternoon by migrant and anti-racist organisations. Some of those organisations were the ones that had denied the involvement of migrants in riots and looting, thus demonstrating their role as capitalist mediators.

In the evening, members of the so-called Communist Youth organised a demo in Peristeri to protest against the attempt on the secondary school student's life in the previous day. According to some reports, some secondary school students barracked the members of the Communist Youth.

A group of art students interrupted a classical concert in Megaro Mousikis, the most important music hall in Greece, distributed leaflets criticising the role of art and artists in relation to the recent events and chanted some slogans against the cops and the state.

## Friday, 19th of December

The French Institute was attacked at noon by 40 people with firebombs and rocks. Slogans were spray-painted on the walls: "Spark in Athens, fire in Paris, insurrection is coming" and "Greece – France: Insurrection everywhere". This action expressed solidarity with the activists who are accused of sabotaging the railways as well as with the secondary school mobilisations in France.

In the afternoon a solidarity concert was given in Propylaia Square with the participation of hundreds of artists and more than 5000 people.

At 6pm a demo was organised in Egaleo, a suburb of Athens by the local anarchist group. More than 100 people participated in the demo which headed for the police station. The demonstrators attacked the police station and broke the windows and cameras of all the banks in their way. At the same place, there was also a demonstration organised by leftist groups which followed another route.

During the day permanent and temp workers, students and unemployed from the occupations of ASOEE and GSEE organised interventions in two call centres: MRB (which is a company organizing public opinion polls) and OTE (which is the national telecommunications company of Greece). The first intervention took place around noon but only a few people participated due to the distance of the site from the city centre. In the second intervention around 60 people participated and blocked the work process for a few minutes. The temp workers

in the call centre responded to the action in a positive way.

At this point 800 secondary schools were under occupation, according to the Secondary School Teachers' Union (OLME).

Around one hundred people interrupted the premiere of the National Theatre in Athens late in the evening. They took the stage and held out a banner reading 'Everyone to the streets. Immediate release of all the arrested during the revolt'. The text distributed to the audience and actors read, among other things: 'now that you've deactivated your mobile phones, it's about time you activated your consciousness'.

## Saturday, 20th of December

During the day 3 radio stations were occupied. In the afternoon, demonstrations were organised in many suburbs and neighborhoods of Athens: Gyzi, Peristeri, Halandri, Vironas, Petralona and Nea Smirni. The demonstrations were organised either by local occupations or by local anti-authoritarian and leftist groups. This mobilization took place after a call for an international day of action by the occupations of ASOEE and National Technical University of Athens. Hundreds of people participated in the demonstrations.

Later, a department store in Agios Panteleimonas, a poor neighborhood of Athens where many migrants live, was looted by a group of militants.

In the evening, the building of Teiresias, an inter-banking

company which "processes data that reflects the economic behaviour of individuals and companies" was attacked and burnt down.

Later, more than a thousand people gathered in the streets around Exarchia square commemorating the murder of Alexandros. Clashes began with the police forces but the crowd was dispersed and pushed back inside the premises of the National Technical University. The clashes continued around the National Technical University until early in the morning.

The financial department of the Greek police force in Nea Filadelfeia was attacked with petrol bombs. Apart from damages to the building, 7 cars were destroyed.

## Sunday, 21st of December

At noon demonstrations took place in Kesariani-Pagrati (about 250 participants) and Ilion (about 100 participants). In Ilion, the demonstrators threw stones and broke the windows of 4 banks and 1 job centre (OAED).

The occupation of GSEE was terminated in the afternoon with a demo that headed for the National Technical University via Patission Avenue. The initial plan for the route of the demo was to pass through nearby proletarian neighborhoods where many migrants live. But this was changed since there were rumours that the police would violate the academic asylum and evacuate the National Technical University. The last meeting in GSEE, which was focused on the issue of solidarity with those

insurgents that are imprisoned or under police persecution, decided to organize a demo on Wednesday 24th of December at 4pm, from Monastiraki Square to Syntagma Square through Ermou Street which is the most expensive commercial district in Greece.

About a hundred students from drama schools interrupted 15 theatre performances around Athens. The main slogans of the interventions were the following: "Insurrectionary new year, everybody to the streets", "It is not possible to kill our dreams".

## Monday, 22nd of December

The Town Hall of Peristeri was occupied at noon by about 100 people.

A mafia-type gang attacked a migrant cleaner, Konstantina Kuneva, 44, the secretary of the cleaners' union, as she was returning home from work late in the evening. They used sulphuric acid to burn her face. As a consequence she lost one eye and has been kept in the intensive care ward hospital in critical situation until now suffering serious sight and respiratory system problems. Konstantina, was working at one of ISAP's (the Athens-Piraeus Electric Railway) subcontracting companies and she said that she was in constant conflict with her bosses and that lately she had been receiving anonymous threatening calls.

## Tuesday, 23rd of December

Early in the morning, shots were fired at a riot police bus

in Goudi without any injuries. A group calling itself 'Popular Action' claimed responsibility for the attack by phoning an online media centre, without leaving a leaflet explaining the reasons why, which is quite unusual as a practice. This, as well as the place from where the shots came (an occupied small building used as a meeting place for antiauthoritarian students) makes the whole case very suspicious. Shortly after, the Public Prosecutor gave the permission to the police to search the area, thus violating the university asylum.
5,000 people participated in the demo organised by the coordinating committees of the occupied universities and secondary schools. Before the demo began some demonstrators flipped over a police car but this action was not followed by further clashes during the demo.

Most of the participants in the occupation of the Law school decided to leave the building.

In Nea Filadelfia 200 people demonstrated, marching from the occupied municipal cultural centre to the local police station. The demonstrators threw eggs, paint and stones at the police station.

## Wednesday, 24th of December

The occupation of ASOEE was terminated in the afternoon.

More than 1500 people, mainly from the anti-authoritarian milieu, participated in the demonstration which was organised by the meeting that took place in the occupation

of GSEE on Sunday in solidarity with the prosecuted insurgents. The demonstration started from Monastiraki Square, passed through Ermou Street, reached Syntagma Square and then returned to Monastiraki Square through Kolokotroni Street. Some youths joined the demo as it passed through the most commercial part of the city at a time when Christmas shopping was at its peak. The slogans of the demo called for a continuation of the insurrection against the Christmas shopping "spirit". The occupation of the National Technical University was terminated at midnight.

## Friday, 26th of December

About 150 people participated in a demo outside Evaggelismos hospital where Konstantina is kept. The slogans called for "resistance against bosses' terrorism".

## Saturday, 27th of December

At noon, 300 people occupied the headquarters of ISAP as a first response to the murderous attack on Konstantina Kuneva. The group that organised this action issued a communiqué.

At 4pm an assembly took place which was called in order to organize solidarity actions with those insurgents that were imprisoned or are under prosecution. It was attended by 500 people. It was decided that on Sunday people would participate in the actions against the opening of shops. (In Greece shops are closed on Sunday, but the state tries to force a law against it. The previous day the government decided to open the shops

"exceptionally" in the centre of Athens in order to compensate the damage the "shop-owners" suffered because of the violence of the insurrection). In the same assembly people also decided to hold a demo outside Korydallos Prisons on New Year's Eve, at 11pm, in order to express their solidarity to the imprisoned insurgents.

## Sunday, 28th of December

At 9:30am about 200 people gathered outside a big bookshop on Syntagma Square and blocked the entrances. Some of them were members of the bookshop assistants' union, but most of them were workers and students from the previous day's solidarity assembly. A lot of the participants decided that they could block more shops and they marched on Ermou St. There, they split into groups of 10 to 20 people and they started blocking the entrances of some main shops of Ermou Str. (like we've said before, one of the most expensive commercial streets of Europe). The slogans shouted were: "Freedom to those who have to work", "They make us work on Sunday, they shoot us, and we live in a war every day". As time was passing, a mass shopping crowd was flooding Ermou Street and it became somehow difficult to keep on blocking the access. It was interesting though that the shop bosses seemed to be afraid: they turned off the lights and waited patiently for the demonstrators to leave the place. Some left-wing people also participated in the blockades which were taking place at the same time in at least 3 other spots of the commercial centre of the city. 500 members of the so called Communist Party marched up and down the street, more interested in giving a

media show than actually blocking the shops. At about 1:30 pm the blockaders decided to leave the place marching towards a big bookshop in Exarchia (about 2km away). After making the boss close the shop, they left. Most of them then went to the ISAP occupied building to take part in a demo from this building to Evaggelismos Hospital where Konstantina is kept, thus putting an end to that particular occupation.

## Monday, 29th of December

At 3pm, about 120 people gathered on the second floor of the commercial centre named "THE MALL ATHENS" –the biggest and most glamorous shopping centre of Attiki region– in Maroussi, a suburb 15km from the centre of Athens, and made a 30-minute demo inside the commercial centre. They were holding two banners, one claiming the immediate liberation of all the arrested insurgents and another one with the motto "I consume, therefore I am". During the demo, which could be seen by everybody inside the building, some of the demonstrators hung another banner, on which there was written "work, consume, die", while others distributed leaflets to the hundreds of the people inside and outside the stores. After the demo was over, they occupied the infodesk microphones and read their leaflets out. Slogans were put up on the walls and "work, vote and shut up" was written near the main entrance. Finally, they left the centre playing football with the balls and ornaments of the Christmas tree just outside the main entrance.

In the afternoon, a demo organised by the solidarity to Konstantina assembly marched to the offices of the cleaning company (the owner of which is an ex-official of PASOK, one of the two major political parties in Greece) in Piraeus. They

went there in order to protect another female worker from being fired. However, the boss had closed the offices and cops were outside guarding the place. The people attacked the police and made them run away, with four police officers taken injured to hospital.

## Wednesday, 31st of December

At 23.30 a crowd of approximately 1000 people gathered outside the prison of Athens which is located at the Korydallos suburb of Athens, demanding the immediate release of the rebels arrested during the uprising of December. The crowd shouted slogans such as "Freedom to all prisoners", "The passion for freedom is stronger than all the cells", "Neither common prisoners, nor political prisoners, let all prisons burn". The inmates set blankets and sheets on fire and they waved them through the windows of the cells. At midnight the gathered crowd lit up fireworks and torches in order to "welcome" the coming of a smashing new year. Then, they marched to the female prison shouting slogans in solidarity with the inmates. Finally, they marched towards the central square of Korydallos verbally - assaulting the police - nd they dispersed.

TPTG
1st January 2009

# Thessaloniki

We present below a rough chronology of events that took place in Greece's second largest city from Saturday 6th of December up until Wednesday 31st of December. During the first five days, when thousands of enraged proletarians got to the streets and set these cities of commodity on fire, we lived the peak of the recent upheaval, at least in Thessaloniki and other provincial cities and towns. During those days, we came across school kids, students, young (mainly, but not only) workers, unemployed, migrant youngsters. Violent behaviour at streets and clashes lessened after December 11. An important thing about the upheaval in Thessaloniki, in contrast to Athens, is that although almost every university department was occupied by students, very few secondary schools were occupied, especially after the first week. For the most part, far fewer school kids participated in demonstrations and actions after the first five days of the upheaval. Migrant youngsters only participated in the massive clashes, attacks and looting that took place from Sunday 7th until Tuesday 10th of December.

This short presentation cannot satisfy the need for an in-depth account of the recent unrest in Greece. It's just a first attempt to inform comrades and proletarians abroad about the ongoing events from the perspective of people participating in them.

## Saturday, 6th of December

Immediately after 15-year-old Alexis-Andreas Gregoropoulos was shot dead by police special guard in Athens, 300 people, mainly anarchist and leftist militants, gathered in the Polytechnics School of Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH), which is located near the commercial and historical city centre. A spontaneous demonstration headed towards the police station at Aristotelous Sq (the most touristic square of the city), where fights with cops took place. At the same time, there were people fighting riot police with stones and Molotov cocktails around Syntrivani Sq, near AUTH. Clashes with cops continued throughout the night.

## Sunday, 7th of December

A demonstration began at noon from Kamara Sq (located in the students' quarter near AUTH). 1500-2000 people (mainly secondary school kids and university students, young workers, anti-authoritarian and leftist militants) marched along the commercial streets of the city centre (Egnatia, Agias Sofias, Tsimiski), smashing bank and shop windows, heading to the police station at Aristotelous Sq. There, many protesters attacked police with stones and some firebombs. A cop was set on fire. Police responded with tear gas. The demo continued along Ermou and Venizelou Streets to the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. Many stores and the city hall were smashed at Venizelou St. After reaching the Ministry, the demonstration headed along Agiou Dimitriou St to the police station of Ano Poli, where riot policemen were attacked again. While returning

to Kamara Sq, a supermarket was looted by youngsters. As the demo was ending, secondary school kids attempted to loot a bookstore and new clashes with riot police started.

Later in the evening, the Higher School of Drama and the offices of Thessaloniki's Bar Association were occupied, the first by Drama students and anarchists and the second mainly by leftist students. Both these spots, located in the city centre, were going to be used as meeting points for people participating in the protests.

During the night, clashes with cops took place outside AUTH. A rioter was injured by a police rubber bullet. During the same night, the police station in the eastern district of Toumpa, the town hall of Agios Pavlos district and the party offices of Nea Demokratia (this is the government party in Greece) in 40 Ekklisies district were attacked.

## Monday, 8th of December

At 10am, 400 secondary school kids demonstrated in Toumpa district and attacked the police station once again. Road blockades took place in other districts of the city as well. Meanwhile, 1500 secondary school kids erected barricades and clashed with riot police at Svolou and Ethnikis Amynis Streets and Navarinou Sq, in the students' quarter of the city centre. Stores in Tsimiski and Venizelou Streets were attacked, too. Nine university faculties were occupied by students. During the same morning the police station in the western district of Sykies was attacked, too.

A demonstration was called at 6.30pm at Kamara Sq. 6000 people marched in the city centre. There were secondary school and university students, some migrant youngsters, hooligans, young workers, anti-authoritarian and leftist militants. A great number of banks and shops (mobile phone, electronics, clothing, fast food companies and jewellery) were destroyed, mainly at Tsimiski St, the city's most commercial road, and Venizelou St. Some of the shops were looted too. Clashes with cops took place in front of the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. Cops used a great amount of tear gas. Fights with cops continued around AUTH during the night.

## Tuesday, 9th of December

This was the day when the funeral of Alexis took place in Palaio Faliro, Athens. Fresh general assemblies of students took place, voting for the occupation of many university departments. Teachers of primary and secondary schools were on strike and there was a work stoppage after 12 pm for all public sector workers. A demonstration was called at 12 pm at Kamara Sq. 4000 people participated and headed towards the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace, where limited clashes with police took place. During Tuesday, prisoners all over Greece abstained from food, protesting against the murder of Alexis by cops and in solidarity to the ongoing revolt.

During the night there were some fights between youngsters and riot police in the university area. We have to mention that during these days many university departments were looted by school kids and migrant youngsters coming

from various suburbs. During the same night, fascists appeared near the university. The same happened in many cities all over Greece, especially in Patras, something that indicates that this was an organised government's plan. In some cases, like in Larisa, fascists attacked rioters together with undercover cops and "angry shop owners".

## Wednesday, 10th of December

This was a day of general strike, called much earlier by the General Labour Confederation of Greece (GSEE) and the Civil Servants' Confederation (ADEDY) against the 2009 state budget. Due to the ongoing riots, the chief unionists announced on Tuesday that they would cancel the proclaimed demonstrations. In Thessaloniki, the local branches of GSEE and ADEDY tried to constrain strikers in a peaceful gathering in front of the city's Trade Union Centre. Secondary school kids and university students appeared there determined to drag strikers in a demonstration and they succeeded. 4000 students and workers marched towards the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. There, a few secondary school kids attacked the cops who responded with tear gas. Fights continued for half an hour in an area of 500m between the Ministry and the Trade Union Centre. A few kids fought police, but many workers and students supported them by remaining in place and insulting the cops. Finally, cops were compelled to draw back. After that, 500 people blockaded Egnatia St - a central avenue in the city centre - for more than an hour.

In the evening, secondary school kids clashed for a while with riot police at Ethnikis Amynis St. During the same

evening, the occupation of Thessaloniki's Bar Association offices ended.

## Thursday, 11th of December

In early afternoon, 80 anti-authoritarian militants attacked the offices of the local Newspaper "Macedonia" at Monastiriou St.

A demo was called by the School of Drama occupation at 5pm at Kamara Sq. 2000 people, mainly university students and anti-authoritarian militants and few secondary school kids, demonstrated peacefully towards the eastern heavily inhabited districts of the city, chanting and drawing on walls slogans against state repression. No clashes took place this day, as far as we know.

## Friday, 12th of December

A demonstration, called by the School of Drama occupation, left Kamara Sq at 6.30 pm. 1500-2000 people, mainly antiauthoritarian militants, students and young workers, headed to the western, working class districts of the city. Demonstrators crossed Neapoli and Sykies districts and returned to the School of Drama through the north-central district of Ano Poli. Despite the heavy rain, the demo lasted 3 hours, slogans against cops and the state or others calling for the immediate release of everyone arrested during last days were ceaselessly repeated and drawn on walls; many leaflets were handed out. Many local inhabitants applauded, while others joined the demo, a fact that

demonstrates a wider sympathy with the insurrection even from proletarians that didn't participate in riots or other actions. A political office of LAOS (far right-wing party) was attacked and set on fire; a political office of Nea Dimokratia was attacked too. This same evening, extra-parliamentary left militants demonstrated in nearby areas.

## Saturday, 13th of December

In the afternoon, 500 people, mainly anti-authoritarian militants, gathered at Kamara Sq. They constituted a block and headed to Aristotelous Sq, where mostly extra-parliamentary left militants gathered after AUTH's Coordination of General Assemblies and Occupations call for a demo. The two groups joined initially a common demonstration of 1000 people along Egnatia St. After a while, the two blocks split being a few meters apart from each other. They both marched along Nikis Avenue, the coastal road of the city centre, full of cafes and bars, where many banks' surveillance cameras were smashed. Leftists headed to the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace while most people left the demo. This was the first demonstration after 7 days that had a political rather than social character.

## Sunday, 14th of December

A motorbike demonstration commenced from the occupied School of Drama at 1pm. It headed to the far western suburbs of the city -Stavroupoli, Evosmos, Eptalofos, Xirokrini- where many migrants from Russia and Albania and low-waged workers live. Some of them joined the demo. When returning,

demonstrators passed in front of the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace and the police station of Ano Poli and headed back to the School of Drama.

Another demonstration took place in the faraway south-eastern suburb of Peraia. 60 school kids and students marched to the police station and then to the town hall, where they placed a banner proclaiming: "Down with the government of killers and police".

## Monday, 15th of December

Early in the morning, an initiative of militants from the School of Drama occupation occupied the town hall of the western district of Sykies, in order to transform it into a local counter-information centre and call for a local popular assembly. Popular assemblies in neighborhoods and occupations of state or municipal buildings emerged as a new form of struggle initially in Athens, introduced by the occupation of the town hall in the suburb of Agios Demetrios, the occupation of the old town hall in Halandri northern suburb and the occupation of Galaxias in Nea Smirni suburb. During this week, this form of struggle spread to other districts and suburbs in Athens and many cities all over Greece.

During the day, local inhabitants passed by the occupied town hall of Sykies; some of them were sympathetic with the action, others just curious. In the evening, at least 200 people met there in the first popular assembly; mainly participants in the protests and riots of the previous days, but also local inhabitants sympathetic with the ongoing upheaval. The assembly decided to call for a local demonstration on Wednesday afternoon and

organise local counter-information actions on Tuesday. This assembly continues to take place at the town hall till now. (i.e. 31 December)

During Monday, many general assemblies of students took place in AUTH, voting for occupying university departments against state repression. Most student assemblies also demanded the government's resignation and the police's disarmament. From what some students told us, these general assemblies were massive, recalling the ones that had taken place during the 2006-2007 student movement. During this week, more students actively participated in the occupations, compared to the previous week, when the single meeting point for anyone had been the streets.

## Tuesday, 16th of December

On Tuesday, the trial of 8 cops took place in Thessaloniki's courthouse; they were accused of heavily beating Avgoustinos Demetriou, a student from Cyprus, on the 17th of November 2006, when on duty and undercover. Although found guilty and sentenced to 15-39 months of imprisonment, they were remanded on bail for 5 Euros a day. 150 people gathered outside the courthouse to protest against the police. When the judgement on the case was pronounced, people attacked riot police guarding the courthouse's entrance with stones, eggs and empty bottles. Cops responded using tear gas and beating protesters.

At 7pm a demonstration called by AUTH's Coordination of General Assemblies and Occupations commenced from Kamara Sq. Approximately 3000 people, for the most part

university students, marched along the major streets of the city centre and headed to the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace. During the demo, slogans and stencils were being drawn on shop windows and walls; militant students occupied for a while three radio stations, broadcasting statements and communiqués. No clashes took place, although cops were heavily insulted when seen.

During Tuesday, fresh general assemblies of students took place and more university departments were occupied. The occupied School of Cinematography, located in the western, working class Stavroupoli suburb, called for 7 days of popular screenings and open discussions in the neighborhood.

## Wednesday, 17th of December

In the morning, a Carrefour supermarket in Stavroupoli suburb was looted by 50 militants. Goods were handed out in a neighboring open-air market.

At 2.30 pm a demonstration, called by the first popular assembly in the occupied town hall of Sykies, commenced from the former prison of Yedi Küle and continued along the streets of Sykies district. Later in the evening, the second popular assembly took place in Sykies. Participants were much fewer than the previous time, mainly local inhabitants.

Meanwhile, the first popular assembly in Ano Poli district took place at 6 pm, with more than 200 people attending it, mostly young people (workers and students) who participated

in the protests and riots of the previous days and many of whom live in this partly preserved and alternative city's district, but also some other local inhabitants of various ages sympathetic with the ongoing unrest. The assembly was held in the building of the municipal library, which had in the past housed a social centre evicted by cops a decade ago. Many people contributed to the discussion with accounts of the previous days' events, while proposing that an essential demand to be claimed is the immediate release of everyone arrested. Counter-information gatherings were arranged for the next day. After the assembly had finished, 150 people participated in a spontaneous demo in the streets of Ano Poli, chanting and drawing slogans against cops, wage labour and the state.

During the same evening, militant students organised another popular assembly in the far western district of Ampelokipi, as far as we know.

## Thursday, 18th of December

AUTH's Coordination of General Assemblies and Occupations called for a demonstration at Kamara Sq at 11am. Due to the heavy rain, only 300 militants gathered and headed to the Ministry of Macedonia and Thrace.

In the evening, a concert was organised at YMCA Sq, next to Thessaloniki's International Exhibition area, by the occupied School of Drama, with several alternative artists participating. 4000-5000 people of various ages were there. Many leaflets calling for solidarity to the arrested were handed out, while respective announcements were made through loudspeakers.

This concert ended after midnight. Later at night, another concert took place in the Polytechnics School called by AUTH's Coordination of General Assemblies and Occupations.

## Friday, 19th of December

The second popular assembly in Ano Poli took place in Koule Kafe Sq, in front of the previously mentioned municipal library. 100-150 people participated; counter-information gatherings were arranged for the next day.

## Saturday, 20th of December

Around 10am, anti-authoritarian militants occupied Olympion cinema, the city's most luxurious cinema and home of the International Film Festival of Thessaloniki, at the heart of the city centre. Official movie screenings gave way to militant movies and documentaries. The cinema's cafe was used as a meeting place for occupants and passersby, with drinks consumed for free. Thousands of leaflets were handed out. Near the occupied Olympion slogans were yelled and a box of candies was thrown to Thessaloniki's mayor during a street charity event which was disrupted. A small police force came immediately in order to defend the ridiculed mayor. At 6pm, 400-500 people gathered in an open assembly that took place in the 'Liberated Olympion Cinema'. Many accounts of the recent unrest and proposals for the future were discussed. Late in the evening the occupation ended with a demonstration of 1000-1500 people along Nikis Avenue and Ethnikis Aminis St. Cops guarding the Christmas tree were attacked with paints; surveillance cameras were destroyed.

## Sunday, 21st of December

The third popular assembly took place in Ano Poli. Approximately 100 people temporarily occupied the church of Taksiarches, where they proposed and discussed actions for the next day. A priest threatened to exorcise the occupiers! This church's occupation constituted a major scandal for conservative parts of the local society. The next day, a dozen of undercover cops guarded Taksiarches church, while riot police guarded another famous church in Ano Poli district.

## Monday, 22nd of December

Early in the morning, the municipal library of Ano Poli was occupied in order to house the popular assemblies and be used as a counter-information centre. During the morning, leaflets were distributed by occupants in the streets and secondary schools of Ano Poli. The fourth popular assembly took place in the evening. Besides organising actions for the next day, a major theme of the assembly was the idea of calling for actions in the city centre during Christmas promoting that "this year we don't celebrate Christmas, we riot".

## Tuesday, 23rd of December

At 6.30, a local demonstration, called by the occupied municipal library, took place along the major streets of Ano Poli district, with 100 militants from the anti-authoritarian milieu participating. Many leaflets calling for the immediate release of the arrested and denouncing Christmas celebrations were handed out to workers in shops, inhabitants and passers by.

Alex, has become the revenge for every day that we are forced to wake up in this world. And what seemed so hard proved to be so simple.

This is what has happened, what we have. If something scares us it is the return to normality. For in the destroyed and pillaged streets of our cities of light we see not only the obvious results of our rage, but the possibility of starting to live. We have no longer anything to do than to install ourselves in this possibility transforming it into a living experience: by grounding it in the field of everyday life, our creativity, our power to materialise our desires, our power not to contemplate but to construct the real. This is our vital space. All the rest is death.

Those who want to understand will understand. Now is the time to break the invisible cells that chain each and everyone to his or her pathetic little life. And this does not require solely or necessarily one to attack police stations and torch malls and banks. The time that one deserts his or her couch and the passive contemplation of his or her own life and takes to the streets to talk and to listen, leaving behind anything private, involves in the field of social relations the destabilising force of a nuclear bomb. And this is precisely because the (till now) fixation of everyone on his or her microcosm is tied to the traction forces of the atom. Those forces that make the (capitalist) world turn. This is the dilemma: with the insurgents or alone. And this is one of the really few times that a dilemma can be at the same time so absolute and real.

*Initiative from the Occupation of the Athens*
*School of Economics and Business*

11th December 2008

## The workers's union of municipality of Agios Dimitrios

On Saturday night the Greek police killed a 15 year old student.

The murder was the last straw.

It was the follow up of a coordinated campaign, a campaign of state terrorism with the help of the fascist organisation "Golden Dawn", which was aimed at university students who are fighting against the privatization of education, the secondary school students, the migrants who are under constant state control because they have the wrong colour, the working class who have to work for a nickel and a dime until they die.

The government judges who have covered up a lot of crimes against society, who burnt the Greek forests in the summer of 2007, are also responsible for the burning of the cities these days. They maintain nepotism. They protect the government people who were involved in the mobile phone interceptions scandal, those looting the public pension funds, those who kidnapped and tortured migrants and those who were involved in law, stock market and church scandals.

We are in civil war with the fascists, the bankers, the state and the mass media who want the young people to be submissive and society to be pacified. Although they have no excuses, they try again to use conspiracy theories as well as theories of "irregular attack" in order to calm spirits down.

The rage that had been accumulated through the years had to be expressed and it shouldn't end.

Throughout the world people set their eyes on what is going on here.

People must rise up everywhere.

This generation of poor, unemployed, precarious, homeless and migrant young people will smash the display window of this society and will wake up the obedient citizens from their sleep of the ephemeral American Dream.

DON'T WATCH THE T.V NEWS, CONSCIOUSNESS RISES IN THE STREETS

WHEN YOUNG PEOPLE ARE MURDERED, THE OLD PEOPLE SHOULD NOT SLEEP

GOODBYE ALEXANDROS, MAY YOUR BLOOD BE THE LAST OF AN INNOCENT TO RUN.

*The workers' s union of municipality of Aghios Dimitrios*

## Open call to join the popular assembly organised by the liberated town hall of Agios Dimitrios in Athens.

On the 6th of December 2008, a police man pulled a gun and shot dead a 15 year old child. Peoples' rage is growing despite the attempts of both the media and the government to mislead public opinion.

It should be evident to all by now that this uprising is not merely an honorary response to the death of Alexandros. Ever since, there has been much talk about theft, burning and looting. For media and politicians, violence is understood only in terms of what disturbs the public order. For us, however:

Violence is working non stop for 40 years and wondering whether you will ever retire.

Violence is the stock market, stolen pensions and shares.
Violence is to be obliged to take on a mortgage which you end up repaying double.

Violence is the managerial right of an employer to dismiss you of your duties any time he or she likes.

Violence is unemployment, precarity, 700 Euro salary.
Violence is "accidents" in the work place, because bosses reduce their costs against the security of their employees.
Violence is being on Prozac and vitamins in order to cope with overtime.

Violence is to be an migrant, to live in fear that you are likely to be deported at any time and experience a constant insecurity.
Violence is to be a housewife, a wage labourer and a mother at the same time.
Violence is to be sexually harassed at work and being told: "Smile, we are not asking you for much are we?"

The uprising of school children, students, unemployed, workers on temporary contracts and migrants broke through the violence of normality. This uprising must not stop! Trade unionists, political parties, priests, journalists and businessmen are determined to maintain the type of violence to which we refer above.

It is not just them; we are also responsible for the indefinite continuation of the situation described above. This uprising has opened a space for communication where we can finally express ourselves freely. We therefore decided to occupy the town hall of Agios Dimitrios and call for a popular assembly, open to everyone.

An open space for dialogue and communication, to break through the silence, to take over our lives!

*Occupation of Agios Dimitrios town hall*
*Athens, Greece*

## These days are ours, too

The following text was distributed at the student picket outside the police headquarters today by people from Athens' Haunt of Albanian Migrants. It shows something very important: that ties of solidarity are being formed and strengthened across different sectors of the Greek society - a wonderful thing!

Following the assassination of Alexis Grigoropoulos we have been living in an unprecedented condition of turmoil, an outflow of rage that doesn't seem to end. Leading this uprising, it seems, are the students - who with an inexhaustible passion and hearty spontaneity have reversed the whole situation. You cannot stop something you don't control, something that is organised spontaneously and under terms you do not comprehend. This is the beauty of the uprising. The secondary school students are making history and leave it to the others to write it up and to classify it ideologically. The streets, the incentive, and the passion belong to them.

In the framework of this wider mobilisation, with the student demonstrations being its steam-engine, there is a mass participation of the second generation of migrants and many refugees also. The refugees come to the streets in small numbers, with limited organisation, with spontaneity and impetus describing their mobilisation. Right now, they are the most militant of the foreigners living in Greece. Either way, they have very little to lose.

The children of migrants mobilise en mass and dynamically, primarily through secondary school and university actions as well as through the organisations of the left and the far left. They are the most integrated part of the migrant community, the most courageous. They are unlike their parents, who came with their heads bowed, as if they were begging for a loaf of bread. They are a part of Greek society, since they've lived in no other. They do not beg for something, they demand to be equal with their Greek classmates. Equal in rights, on the streets, in dreaming.

For us, the politically organised migrants, this is a second French November of 2005. We never had any illusions that when the peoples' rage overflew we would be able to direct it in any way. Despite the struggles we have taken on during all these years we never managed to achieve such a mass response as this. Now it is time for the street to talk: The deafening scream heard is for the 18 years of violence, repression, exploitation and humiliation. These days are ours, too.

These days are for the hundreds of migrants and refugees who have been murdered at the borders, in police stations, workplaces. They are for those murdered by cops or "concerned citizens." They are for those murdered for daring to cross the border, working to death, for not bowing their head, or for nothing. They are for Gramos Palusi, Luan Bertelina, Edison Yahai, Tony Onuoha, Abdurahim Edriz, Modaser Mohamed Ashtraf and so many others that we haven't forgotten.

These days are for the everyday police violence that remains

unpunished and unanswered. They are for the humiliations at the border and at the migrant detention centres, which continue to date. They are for the crying injustice of the Greek courts, the migrants and refugees unjustly in prison, the justice we are denied. Even now, in the days and nights of the uprising, the migrants pay a heavy toll - what with the attacks of far-righters and cops, with deportations and imprisonment sentences that the courts hand out with Christian love to us infidels.

These days are for the exploitation continuing unabatedly for 18 years now. They are for the struggles that are not forgotten: in the farms of Volos, the olympic works, the town of Amaliada. They are for the toil and the blood of our parents, for informal labour, for the endless shifts. They are for the deposits and the adhesive stamps, the welfare contributions we paid and will never have recognised. It is for the papers we will be chasing for the rest of our lives like a lottery ticket.

These days are for the price we have to pay simply in order to exist, to breathe. They are for all those times when we crunched our teeth, for the insults we took, the defeats we were charged with. They are for all the times when we didn't react even though we had all the reasons in the world to do so. They are for all the times when we did react and we were alone because our deaths and our rage did not fit pre-existing shapes, didn't bring votes in, didn't sell in the prime-time news.

These days belong to all the marginalised, the excluded, the people with the difficult names and the unknown stories. They belong to all those who die every day in the Aegean sea and Evros river, to all those murdered at the border or at a

central Athens street; they belong to the Roma in Zefyri, to the drug addicts in Eksarhia. These days belong to the kids of Mesollogiou Street, to the unintegrated, the uncontrollable students. Thanks to Alexis, these days belong to us all.

18 years of silent rage are too many.
To the streets, for solidarity and dignity!
We haven't forgotten, we won't forget - these days are yours too

*Luan, Tony, Mohamed, Alexis...*
*Haunt of Albanian Migrants*

14th December 2008

## Up Against The Wall Motherfuckers! We've come for what's ours...

In these days of rage, spectacle as a power-relation, as a relation that imprints memory onto objects and bodies, is faced with a diffuse counter-power which deterritorialises impressions, allowing them to wonder away from the tyranny of the image and into the field of the senses. Senses are always felt antagonistically (they are always acted against something) – but under the current conditions they are driven towards an increasingly acute and radical polarisation.

Against the supposedly peaceful caricatures of bourgeois media ("violence is unacceptable always, everywhere"), we can only laugh out loud: their rule, the rule of gentle spirits and consent, of dialogue and harmony is nothing but a well calculated pleasure in beastliness: a promised carnage. The democratic regime in its peaceful façade doesn't kill an Alex every day, precisely because it kills thousands of Ahmets, Fatimas, JorJes, Jin Tiaos and Benajirs: because it assassinates systematically, structurally and without remorse, the entirety of the third world, that is the global proletariat. It is in this way, through this calm everyday slaughter, that the idea of freedom is born: freedom not as a supposedly panhuman good, nor as a natural right for all, but as the war cry of the damned, as the premise for civil war.

The history of the legal order and the bourgeois class brainwashes us with an image of gradual and stable progress of humanity, within which violence stands as a sorry exception stemming from the economically, emotionally and culturally underdeveloped. Yet all of us who have been crushed between school desks, in offices, and in factories, know only too well that history is nothing but a succession of bestial acts installed upon a morbid system of rules. The cardinals of normality weep for the law that was violated by the bullet of the pig Korkoneas (the killer cop). But who doesn't know that the force of the law is merely the force of the powerful? That it is law itself that allows for violence to be exercised on violence? The law is void from end to bitter end; it contains no meaning, no target other than the coded power of imposition.

At the same time, the dialectic of the left tries to codify conflict, battle and war, with the logic of the synthesis of opposites. In this way it constructs an order; a pacified condition within which everything has its proper little place. Yet, the destiny of conflict is not synthesis – as the destiny of war is not peace. Social insurrection comprises the condensation and explosion of thousands of negations, yet it does not contain even in a single one of its atoms, nor in a single one of its moments its own negation, its own end. This always comes heavy and gloomy like a certainty from the institutions of mediation and normalisation, from the left promising voting rights at 16, disarmament but preservation of the pigs, a welfare state, etc. Those, in other words, who wish to capitalise political gains upon the wounds of others. The sweetness of their compromise drips with blood.

Social anti-violence cannot be held accountable for what it does not assume: it is destructive from end to end. If the struggles of modernity have anything to teach us, it is not their sad adhesion upon the subject (class, party, group) but their systematic anti-dialectical process: the act of destruction does not necessarily carry a dimension of creation. In other words, the destruction of the old world, and the creation of a new one, comprise two discrete but continuous processes. The issue then is which methods of destruction can be developed at different points and moments of the insurrection. Which methods may not only preserve the level and the extent of the insurrection, but also contribute to its qualitative upgrading. The attacks on police stations, the clashes and roadblocks, the barricades and street battles, now comprise an everyday and socialised phenomenon in the metropolis and beyond. And they have contributed to a partial deregulation of the circle of production and consumption. And yet, they are still only in a partial targeting of the enemy; direct and obvious to all, yet entrapped in only one dimension of the attack against dominant social relations. However, the process of production and circulation of goods in itself, in other words, the capital-relation, is only indirectly hit by the mobilisations. A spectre hovers over the city torched: the indefinite wild general strike.

The global capitalist crisis has denied the bosses their most dynamic, most extorting response to the insurrection: "We offer you everything, for ever, while all they can offer is an uncertain present". With one firm collapsing after the other, capitalism and its state are no longer in a position to offer anything other than worse days to come, tightened financial

conditions, sackings, the suspension of pensions, welfare cuts, the crushing of free education. Contrarily, in just seven days, the insurgents have proved in practice what they can do: turn the city into a battlefield, create enclaves of communes across the urban fabric, abandon individuality and its pathetic security, seeking the composition of their collective power and the total destruction of this murderous system.

At this historical conjuncture of crisis, rage and the dismissal of institutions at which we finally stand, the only thing that can convert the systemic deregulation into a social revolution is the total rejection of work. When street fighting take place in streets dark from the strike of the Electricity Company; when clashes take place amidst tons of uncollected rubbish, when trolley-buses close streets, blocking off the cops, when the striking teacher lights up his revolted pupil's molotov cocktail, then we will be finally able to say: "Ruffians, the days of your society are numbered; we weighted its joys and its justices and we found them all too short". This, today, is no longer a mere fantasy but a concrete ability in everyone's hand: the ability to act concretely on the concrete. The ability to storm the heavens.

If all of this, namely the extension of the conflict into the sphere of production-circulation, with sabotages and wild strikes seem premature, it might just be because we haven't quite realised how fast power decomposes, how fast confrontational practices and counter-power forms of organising are socially diffused: from secondary school students pelting police stations with stones, to municipal employees and neighbours occupying town halls. The revolution does not take place with prayers and piety for historical conditions. It occurs by seizing whatever

opportunity of insurrection arises in every aspect of the social; by transforming every reluctant gesture of condemnation of the cops into a definite strike to the foundations of this system.

Off the pigs!

*Initiative from the Occupation of the Athens*
*School of Economics and Business*
*December 2008*

## (Self)destruction is creation

We won't forget the night of December 6th that easily. Not because the assassination of Alexis was incomprehensible. State violence, as much as it might try to construct itself into more productive formations of sovereignty, will endlessly return to dear and archetypal forms of violence. It will always retain within its structure a state disobeying the modernist command for discipline, surveillance and control of the body - opting, rather, for the extermination of the disobedient body and chosing to pay the political cost that comes with this decision.

When the cop shouts "hey, you", the subject to whom this command is directed, and who turns its body in the direction of authority (in the direction of the call of the cop) is innocent by default since it responds to the voice reproaching it as a product of authority. The moment when the subject disobeys this call and defies it, no matter how low-key this moment of disobedience might be (even if it didn't throw a molotov at the cop car but a water bottle) is a moment when authority loses its meaning and becomes something else: a breach that must be repaired. When the manly honour of the fascist-cop is insulted he may even kill in order to protect (as he himself will claim) his kids and his family. Moral order and male sovereignty - or else the most typical form of symbolic and material violence - made possible the assassination of Alexis; they supported the murder, produced its "truth" and made it a reality.

Along with this, at the tragic limit of a death that gives

meaning to lives shaped by its shade, revolt became a reality: this incomprehensible, unpredictable convulsion of social rhythms, of the broken time/space, of the structures structured no more, of the border between what is and what is to come.

A moment of joy and play, of fear, passion and rage, of confusion and some consciousness that is grievous, dynamic and full of promises. A moment which, regardless, will either frighten itself and preserve the automatons that created it, or will constantly deny itself in order to become at each moment something different to what it was before: all in order to avoid ending up at the causality of revolts suffocated in normality, revolts becoming another form of authority whilst defending themselves.

How did this revolt become possible? What right of the insurgents was vindicated, at what moment, for what murdered body? How was this symbol socialised? Alexis was "our Alexis", he was no "other", no foreigner, no migrant. Secondary school students could identify with him; mothers feared losing their own child; establishment voices would turn him into a national hero. The body of the 15-year old mattered, his life was worth living, its ending was an assault against the public sphere - and for this reason mourning Alex was possible and nearly necessary. This sphere turned against a community which we who revolted don't identify with, just as Alexis did not identify with it. This is a community, regardless, to which many of us have the privilege to belong, since the other recognises us as their own. The story of Alexis will be written from their side. He was a good kid, they said. The revolt, which we could not have predicted, became possible through the cracks of authority itself: an authority

deciding which bodies matter in the social network of relations of power. The revolt, this hymn to social non-regularity, is a product of regularity... It is the revolt for "our own" body that was exterminated, for our own social body. The bullet was shot against society as a whole. It was a wound to every bourgeois democrat who wants their own security to be reflected upon the state and its organs. The bullet was a declaration of war against society. The social contract was breached - there is no consensus. The moral and political act of resistance became possible, understandable, just, visible at the moment when it came under the terms and conditions of justice of the dominant symbolic order encompassing the social fabric.

This starting point does not cancel the righteousness of the uprising. Because the dominant speech; the authority that gives name, shape and meaning to things; the range of dominant ideas from which the concept of social segmentation derives (in order to control the hierarchical social relations) have all already excluded the "hooded youths" from this community. They have cornered them at the community's dangerous borderline in order to set the limits of disobedience.

They tell us to resist but not in this fashion, they say, because it is dangerous. What the social legitimation which we came across at the beginning of all this has got to tell us is that even if we are tangled in the web of authority, even if we are its creations, we are inside and against it; we are what we do in order to change who we are. We want this historical moment to adopt the content we have set ourselves, and not the meanings from which it can escape overnight.

It is not possible for this authority to bloodlessly cross the boundary between obedience and autonomous action, since if the rebels need to muster up their masculinity in order to fight the cops, they need to question it at the same time, because it constitutes the authority they use to fight the cops. And this ambivalence lies at the heart of our subjectivity, it is a contradiction that tears us apart and forms the moral splendour that takes place in the margins of the rebellion, outside and inside us, on the quiet nights when we wonder what is going on now, what has gone wrong, and we can only hear silence.

Nothing exists without the meaning assigned to it. Resistance strategies can turn into strategies of authority: chaos will recreate a hierarchy in social relationships unless we fight with ourselves while fighting the world, some selves that we formed as part of this world: we have grown within the moral and political limits this world sets, within the moral-political ties in which the self comes into being... It will recreate itself into a hierarchy, should we not challange male macho behaviour that goes berzerk and gets carried away by emotion, should we adopt positions that solidify in positions of authority.

*Girls In Revolt*

17th December 2008

## DECLARATION :
## We will either determine our history ourselves or let it be determined without us

Since 8 o'clock in the morning the building of GSEE (Patision and Alexandras) is occupied. We declare the building a Liberated Workers' Zone. Open Workers' Assembly at 6pm. The building is open to all workers all day long.

We, manual workers, employees, jobless, temporary workers, local or migrant, are not passive tv-viewers. Since the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos on Saturday night, we participate in the demonstrations, the clashes with the police, the occupations of the centre or the neighbourhoods. Time and again we had to leave work, and our daily obligations, to take the streets with the secondary school and university students and the other proletarians in struggle.

WE DECIDED TO OCCUPY THE BUILDING OF GSEE

• To turn it into a space of free expression and a meeting point of workers.

• To dispell the media-touted myth that the workers were and are absent from the clashes, and that the rage of these days was

an affair of some 500 "mask-wearers", "hooligans" or some other fairy tale, while on the tv-screens the workers were presented as victims of the clash, while the capitalist crisis in Greece and worldwide leads to countless layoffs that the media and their managers present as a "natural phenomenon".

• To flay and uncover the role of the trade union bureaucracy in the undermining of the insurrection -and not only there. GSEE and the entire trade union mechanism that has supported it for decades and decades, undermine our struggles, bargain our labour power for crumbs, perpetuate the system of exploitation and wage slavery. The stance that GSEE took last Wednesday is quite telling: GSEE cancelled the programmed strikers' demonstration, limiting itself to the organisation of a brief gathering in Syntagma Sq, simultaneously insuring that the people will be dispersed quickly from the Square, fearing that they might get infected by the virus of insurrection.

• To open up this space for the first time - as a continuation of the social opening created by the insurrection itself - a space that has been built by our contributions, a space from which we were excluded. For all these years we trusted our fate to saviours of every kind, and we ended up losing our dignity. As workers we have to start taking our responsibilities, and to stop assigning our hopes to wise leaders or "able" representatives. We have to acquire a voice of our own, to meet up, to talk, to decide and to act. Against the generalised attack we endure. The creation of collective "grassroots" resistance is the only way.

• To propagate the idea of self-organisation and solidarity in

working places, struggle committees and collective grassroots strategies, abolishing the bureaucrat trade unionists.

All these years we have endured the misery, the pandering, the violence in work. We became accustomed to counting our crippled and our dead - the so-called "labour accidents". We became accustomed to ignoring the migrants - our class brothers - getting killed. We are tired of living with the anxiety of securing a wage, revenue stamps, and a pension that now feels like a distant dream.

As we struggle not to abandon our life in the hands of the bosses and the trade union representatives, likewise we will not abandon any arrested insurgent who is in the hands of the state and the juridical mechanism.

IMMEDIATE RELEASE OF THE DETAINED
NO CHARGES TO THE ARRESTED
SELF-ORGANISATION OF THE WORKERS
GENERAL STRIKE

WORKERS' ASSEMBLY IN THE "LIBERATED" BUILDING OF GSEE

*General Assembly of Insurgent Workers*

24th December 2008

## Announcement by the Athens Polytechnic occupation

The Occupation of the Polytechnic ended at midnight on the 24th of December. The struggle continues...

Immediately after the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos by the special police guard Ep. Korkoneas and the first clashes in the streets of Exarchia, the Polytechnic was occupied and turned into a focus for the expression of social rage. Being a space historically and symbolically connected (in the living memory of the rebels and a large part of society) with the struggle against Authority - from the period of dictatorship until today's modern totalitarian democracy - the Polytechnic became the place where hundreds of people gathered spontaneously: comrades, youth and workers, jobless, pupils, migrants, students...

The fights with the forces of repression and the flaming barricades in the surrounding streets, became the spark of a revolt that spread with spontaneous demonstrations in the city, with the occupation of the Economics University and the Law School, with attacks against state and capitalist targets in the centre and neighborhoods of Athens and in most cities across the country. The following days, with demonstrations of thousands of people ending up in riots and attacks against

banks, ministries and big department stores, with occupations of schools and public buildings, with young children besieging and assaulting police stations, the riot police guarding Koridallos prison and the parliament, the revolt became generalised; this revolt that was triggered by the murder of A. Grigoropoulos and exploded by the immediate reaction of hundreds of comrades to that event of widespread state violence, inspiring actions of rage and solidarity beyond the borders, all over the world. This revolt that was simmering in the conditions of a generalised attack by the state and the bosses against society, growing in the reality of the everyday death of freedom and dignity that is reserved for the oppressed people by the increasing exclusion, poverty, exploitation, repression and control. This revolt that was persistently being "prepared", even in the darkest times of state and fascist terrorism, through every small or big gesture of resistance against submission and surrender, keeping open the way for many more people to meet in the streets, just like it happened during these days. In this explosive social reality, the occupied Polytechnic became a point of reference for a direct confrontation with the state, in all forms and with all possible means, through consecutive insurrectionary events that burned down the order and security of the bosses, smashing the fake image of social consent to their murderous intentions. It became a place where rebellious social and political subjects met and influenced one another, through the general assemblies and their daily presence in the occupation. It functioned as a base for counter-information, through communiqués and posters, its blog and radio station, and with the PA system sending messages and the news of the ongoing revolt. And it also gave life to political initiatives of resistance, like the call made by

the Polytechnic occupation assembly for a global day of action on the 20th of December – which resulted in coordinated mobilisations in more than 50 cities in different countries, and in which the Polytechnic occupiers participated by calling for a gathering in the place where A. Grigoropoulos was murdered - like the concert held on the 22nd of December for solidarity and financial support for the hostages of the revolt, and the call for participation in the prisoner solidarity demonstration that was organised by comrades who took part in the open assembly of the occupied GSEE (General Workers' Confederation).

For 18 days the occupied Polytechnic became a stable point of the revolt that expanded, and it was a continuous call of insubordination to the people resisting all over the world, and a permanent sign of solidarity to the hostages taken by the state from within this struggle. It became the territory we used in order to spread the message of solidarity between the oppressed, of self-organisation and of a social and class counter-attack against the world of Authority, its mechanisms and its symbols. These elements and values of the struggle created the ground for the oppressed to meet in rebellion, armed our consciences and, for the first time maybe, became so widely appropriated by so many people of different ages and different nationalities; people with whom anarchists and anti-authoritarians shared the same slogans against the police, the same words, the same practices of struggle, the same rage against those who are looting our lives, and, often, the same vision for a world of freedom, equality and solidarity.

For this reason, repression was not only expressed in the form of police brutality, arrests and imprisonment of

10th January 2009

## The workers will have the last word - Not the media bosses

*First statement coming out of the newly-occupied building of the (reformist) Union of Journalists in Athens (ESIEA). In a similar manner to the earlier occupation of the General Confederation of Workers' Bulding, people have now occupied the Journalists' union to denounce mainstream media lies.*

The thousands of protesters that filled the streets of Greece on Friday January 9th, proved that the fire of December won't be put out, either by bullets and acid against activists, or by the ideological terrorism spread by the media these last few days. Consequently, the States only response to the youth and the workers was, once more, raw repression. Encouraged by the media's demands of zero tolerance, and by the orders of their bosses, the police were free to attack with chemicals, violence and arrests, against anyone who came their way.

When, as on January 9th oppression by the State turns even against the workers, journalists, photographers and lawyers who stand in the streets against the side of the murderers, it becomes even clearer that the rebellion during the past month has put forward an issue of dignity for everyone whose survival depends on wage labour. As a result, some of us, media workers and students, stand beside the rebels. We do it actively: we

participate in their fight as workers, and we join their fight with our own everyday battle in our places of work. Our main goal is to prevent the bosses from imposing their views of the events, an example of which is that a photographer, Kostas Tsironis, was fired by the daily newspaper "Eleftheros Typos" ("Free press") because he took a picture of a cop raising his handgun a day after the 15-year old Alexandros Grigoropoulos was murdered.

We don't fool ourselves about what the media, a crucial ideology apparatus of the State, will do to force the people to leave the streets and go home; they'll do everything, and we know it all too well, because, of course, we work in the media. We also recognize that the big-time journalists are only able to promote the abolition of university asylum and the idea of two different kinds of demonstrators (the violent "koukouloforoi" vs. the "peaceful" ones), as long as we remain silent.

Our place is with the rebels. One more reason for this is because we experience everyday exploitation in our workplaces too. In the media industry, like everywhere else, we have to deal with the consequences of precarious, insecure or unpaid labour, piece working, overtime, and all the other forms of bosses whims. Lately, under the threat of a coming economic crisis, we also experience intensification of layoffs, and of the fear of them.

Like all workers, we experience the hypocrisy and the betrayal of the unions. The Journalists Union of Athens (ESIEA) is an institution that turns against the workers' calls for resistance against the bosses, due to the crucial need to overcome any internal divisions and job fragmentation, in order

to create a united trade union in the press. In their attempt to split the media workers from all the other workers, ESIEA is, in reality, a bosses' union and a basic support mechanism for them, as their refusal to take part in the general strike on Wednesday, December 10th 2008 showed.

For all these reasons, as an initiative of wage workers, unpaid workers, recently-fired workers and students in the media, we have decided to occupy the ESIEA building, in order to voice all these things, in solidarity with a society in revolt :

Free information, against the ideological propaganda of our bosses in the media

Direct action, self-organised and democratic, by all media workers against the attacks waged against each and every one of us.

* Solidarity with militant worker Konstantina Kuneva

* Immediate release of everyone arrested during the rebellion

* We have no fear of getting fired; the bosses should fear our strikes

*From the occupied building of ESIEA*

## Reality is an illusion
## Normality is beyond us

During the last days we have been living in a constant contradiction. Work in the mornings, "insurrection" at night. An insurrection triggered by the cold blooded murder of Alexis Grigoropoulos by the police. The murder and the explosion of the reactions that followed were not accidental events. They were the catalyst that brought to the fore a situation whose conditions were formed some time ago.

These conditions have much to do with the economic situation, the insurance deregulation, the education reforms and the intensification of our lives in every aspect, the plundering of our space and time. And it's not just these conditions. The era of the first victories of the workers' movement isn't much different from our experiences, with the actual annulment of basic labour rights, the curtailment of personal freedoms, the attempt to turn society into a "fragmented puzzle" of insecurity, confusion, terror-hysteria and repression. The workers' rights of yesterday are becoming objects of dispute in today's struggles.

We are living in an era characterised by the intensification of production, of flexible working conditions, by the rejection of the collective spirit, and by the glorification of individualism at every level. The loss of the worker's identity inside the production process is the logical outcome of the always intensifying demand of the boss for a worker-"chameleon" who adapts with ease to any condition of wage exploitation. An exploitation that doesn't

shy away from legalising workers who are in reality rented, from throwing the work force into a precarious workers' market. The more extreme part of this uninsured work is done mostly by migrants.

Simultaneously, as workers we are called to pay for the economic crisis. A crisis that is mostly caused by our inability to exert a shining consuming behaviour, while remaining docile to the commands of the bosses, and contented with crumbs of the basic wage. And it's not just that. Not only do they steal our labour power, they overwhelm us with tax-plundering to cover the deficits of a national budget that does not serve the interests of the workers. And while the socially necessary working time is on the wane, our working hours keeping growing in direct proportion with the rhythm that a stratum on the margins of society is growing and reproducing - the jobless. To summarise, to solidify the relationship of exploiters-exploited the illusion of a "common interest" is created, while in reality we all work for the interest of the boss.

The title of our text is not accidental. From the ashes of last days' destructive spontaneity, we recognize the power of those "from below" to define the public sphere and create the social frame in which to function. We are not just the producers of the social wealth, we are the social wealth itself. We are the ones who keep the cohesion in society and ensure its viability. As we acquire awareness of our power, we are becoming more dangerous than ever.

We propose :

• immediate blocking of the production process.

• social wages regardless of occupation, to live in decency, and to annul the separations promoted by the State and the Capital.

• social insurance for all

• creation of poles of self-organised collective struggle in every working sector.

• Against the bureaucratic syndicalism of the state "guild" that is GSEE-ADEDY* Bring it down!

LETS BUILD TODAY THE WORLD OF TOMORROW

*Fellow Precarious Workers from the Occupied ASOEE***

* Greece's two largest reformist unions

** ASOEE. Athens University of Economics and Business - the occupation is comprised out of students, workers, jobless, radicals, migrants etc etc.

16th December 2008

## About the interruption by protesting civilians of the newscast at the greek national broadcast station

Our action is a response to the accumulated pressures that ravage our lives, and not simply an emotional outburst in the wake of the murder of Alexandros Grigoropoulos by the Greek police.

We are yet another spontaneous collective that forms part of the social uprising in progress.

In a symbolic move to prevent the media from subduing us, citizens & civilians, we interrupt the newscast of the Hellenic Broadcasting Corporation (NET). We believe that the media systematically cultivates a climate of fear, promoting misinformation as information, and portraying a multi-faceted uprising as an outburst of reckless violence.

The explosion of civil unrest is explained in criminal rather than political terms. Crucial events are selectively brushed under the carpet. The uprising is served up as entertainment, something to watch until the next soap opera comes on. The media are being used as a means of suppressing free and original thought on a daily basis.

Let us organise ourselves. No authority can provide solutions to our problems. We must rally together and turn our public spaces – streets, squares, parks, and schools – into areas of unhindered expression and communication. Let us come together, face to face, side by side, to formulate our cause and our course of action as one.

Let us overcome the fear, switch off our television sets, come out of our houses, continue to assert our rights, and take our lives into our own hands.

We condemn police violence and call for the immediate release of all protesters held in custody.

We stand for emancipation, human dignity, and freedom.

## When they mess with one of us they mess with all of us

On the 27th of December we occupied the headquarters of ISAP (Athens Piraeus Electric Railway) as a first response to the murderous attack against Konstantina Kuneva on the 23rd December. Sulphuric acid was thrown at her face as she was returning home from work.

Konstantina is in the intensive care ward of Evangelismos hospital suffering serious sight and respiratory system problems.

Who was Konstantina? Why was she attacked?

Konstantina is one among the hundreds of female migrant workers who have been working for years as cleaners. She is general secretary of the Panattic Union of Cleaners and Domestic Personnel. She is a militant union organizer, well known for her stance against various bosses. Just last week she had a clash with the employer company "OIKOMET" when she demanded for herself and the rest of her colleagues to get paid the whole amount of money of her Christmas bonus. She also denounced illegal procedures in payments. Just a short while ago the same company fired her mother in an act of revenge against her and she herself got an unfavourable transfer to Marousi station. There is also a case of a three-part meeting in the Labour Inspection Office still pending on the 5th January 2009 concerning a denouncement of hers. Situations like these are not at all rare in the field of cleaning and employee lending companies. It's exactly the opposite.

This is the rule when it comes to cleaning company contractors: delayed contracts, stolen wages, stolen overtime payments, differences between contract assets and what the employee actually gets paid, selection of almost exclusively migrant male and female workers with green card status (legal residency in Greece ranging from 1 to 5 years – in most cases only 1 year) so they can be held in a state of hostageship, social security benefits that are never attributed. All these with the support of the public sector and enterprises which are aware, incite and support working conditions reminiscent of the middle ages.

OIKOMET in particular, a cleaning company with enterprises all over Greece and owned by Nikitas Oikonomakis who is a member of PASOK (Greek Socialist Party), "officially" employs 800 workers – on the other hand, workers say that their number is at least twice as much and during the last 3 years the turnover amounts to 3000). Illegal procedures on the part of the employer company are on the everyday list. To be more specific, employees sign "blank page contracts" and they are never given a copy of them. They work 6 hours a day but get paid for 4,5 (including stamp) because in this way they appear to be working less than 30 hours per week on paper and the boss is not forced to include them in the "higher stamp category". Employees get terrorised, they get unfavourable transfers, they get fired and blackmailed into resigning voluntarily (a female employee was threatened by her employer into signing her resignation after being held for 4 hours in a space owned by the company). The boss organised a "yellow" (company) union in order to manipulate employees while he fires and hires people

as he wishes, ruling out any prospect of communication inside the workplace or collective action.

What is the connection between OIKOMET and ISAP?

OIKOMET has been assigned as a cleaning contractor for ISAP (as well as the cleaning of other public sector and corporations) because it can "provide" the cheapest deal that includes the highest level of exploitation and devaluation of work. This "regime" of "offer and demand" is based on public sector organisations such as ISAP. ISAP is an accomplice in maintaining this regime of crude exploitation despite repeated denouncements by the union.

The murderous attack against our colleague was an act of revenge and was intended to serve as an example.

The target was not coincidental. Female, migrant, militant union organiser, mother of an underage child, she was the most vulnerable for the bosses.

The method was not coincidental. It resembles the "dark" ages and aims to "brand", to serve as an example and terrorize us.

The time chosen was not coincidental. The media, the political parties, the Church, businessmen and union bosses have been trying to ridicule the social movement that has taken the form of an explosion and talk about the cold-blooded murder of 15-year-old Alexandros as the result of a bullet getting

redirected. In this pretext, the attack on Konstantina is lost in the everyday news.

This murderous attack on the part of the employers was well-planned.

Konstantina is one of us. Her struggle for DIGNITY and SOLIDARITY is also our struggle.

The attack on Konstantina has left a mark in all our hearts. It has left a mark in our memory as have done the racist pogroms, the concentration camps for migrants, the attacks by thugs working for the state, the workplace accidents, the people murdered by the state, the working conditions that resemble galleys, the purges, the lay-offs and the terror. All these show the long way ahead for the social and class struggle.

Our hearts are filled with sorrow and rage and one sentence comes to our lips:

MURDERERS, YOUR TIME WILL COME
THE EMPLOYERS TERROR SHALL NOT PASS

*Solidarity assembly for konstantina kuneva*

1st March 2009

## My Kuneva

Text translated from the blog of the Anarchist Incentive of Aigaleo (Aigaleo is a working class neighbourhood in Western Athens).

I was born and raised in a working class neighbourhood somewhere in Western Athens.

My parents were your typical villagers who arrived in the city to fulfil the petit bourgeois dream that it promised. When I started going to school my mother spoke to me about her occupation. She told me that whenever someone asked what her job was I should say that she worked at a shirt factory. Indeed, I recycled those words of hers for many years.

My mother's true occupation was a cleaner. In houses, in shops, uninsured, with bosses who had an increased demand for slaves. With constant negotiations over whatever little money they would pay her, with constant pleadings for them to give holiday pay she would rarely receive. All of this filled her with silence, not with a voice. Her mouth was shut to such a degree that I never remember her complaining, not even to us. Her own people. Even before growing up I decided that it would be me breaking this silence on behalf of us all. I was not ashamed. I was not ashamed to say that my mother was a cleaner. Even

before growing up I spoke to her. And even before growing up she spoke to me too: she told me about her shame, her fear, for the behaviour of the "good society" to its staff, which it needs primarily for visual, aesthetic purposes.
The silence gradually broke across the entire family.

Mother's true occupation: cleaner.
Mother's true occupation: cleaner who will never receive a pension.
Mothers' true occupation: cleaner with no insurance who was fired every single time she demanded what was hers.
Mother's true occupation: cleaner with no insurance who got sworn at every single time she raised a word about her working rights.
Mother's true occupation: "Konstantina Kuneva".

"The sulphuric acid fell on my mother's eyes. Her gaze is now brighter. The sulphuric acid fell on my mother's vocal chords. Her speech is now bolder. The acid fell on my mother's soul, too. And her shame disappeared."

She gave money for Konstantina's medical treatment, she wanted to take to the streets for her (even if she didn't manage to do so) and she came out to my father's bourgeois family about her occupation.

She told me: "I feel sad about Konstantina. Every night I think of her".

I told her: "Today, I love you more than ever".
X.

9th December 2008

## Eyewitness Report from Patras: This is what a junta looks like!

Tuesday's demonstration was called by local anarchist groups. Participation was phenomenal by the city's standards – around 3000 people (some reports put this number up to 5000) took the streets of Patras behind the anarchist banners and against state violence. The march cruised through the city; banks were smashed. Meanwhile, the city's police force had gathered around the main police station in order to protect it.

Toward the end of the demo however the riot police launched a major attack, forcing it to retreat toward the city's historical university building (the so-called parartima). Soon thereafter, the most incredible attack began: Tens of fascists (that seem to had gathered in Patras from across the country, in a pre-planned joint operation with the police) attacked the demonstration with knives and stones. Co-ordinating perfectly with the police, they continued their attack and, according to some reports, even did some joint arrests. The demonstrators were confronted with the following unbelievable spectacle: They were facing a group of people throwing police-owned tear gas at them while chanting "blood-honour-golden dawn" (the name of a nazi group in Greece).

The demonstrators' block (which only numbered around

500 at the time, as this happened near the end of the demo) was completely torn apart; people were chased all the way into their flats; demonstrators had to seek refuge in flats in 10s and 20s, while the cops and the nazis would smash their windows and try to force entry.

Patras Indymedia reports 26 detentions and 9 arrests. Thankfully, the reports that the fascists would head for the city's Afghan refugee camp have proven false so far.

What makes the above story even more unbelievable is that the mainstream media report it as the "local business owners" being the ones who attacked the demonstrators, "taking the law into their own hands". Putting aside the minor detail that absolutely no local businesses were damaged (only multinational banks, the courts and the police station), these supposed "shop owners" and "respectful citizens" were depicted in media in their balaclavas, holding knives! There was an unbelievable joint police-fascist operation in Patras today and they are trying to cover it up and to claim the public has turned against the demonstrators.

It is crucial to confront their lies and to resist their repression – the future of this movement could depend on this. Please spread the word.

## Faceless:

(A text distributed on the streets of Athens these days. See this post for some background information on Konstantina's case)

The attack against Konstantina Kuneva wasn't a murderous one. Her likely death as a result of this attack was a secondary issue for the pigs who conducted it. The sulphuric acid was used for her stigmatisation, her degradation, her disgrace. For her return to order, to the domestic and private, to the role of woman.

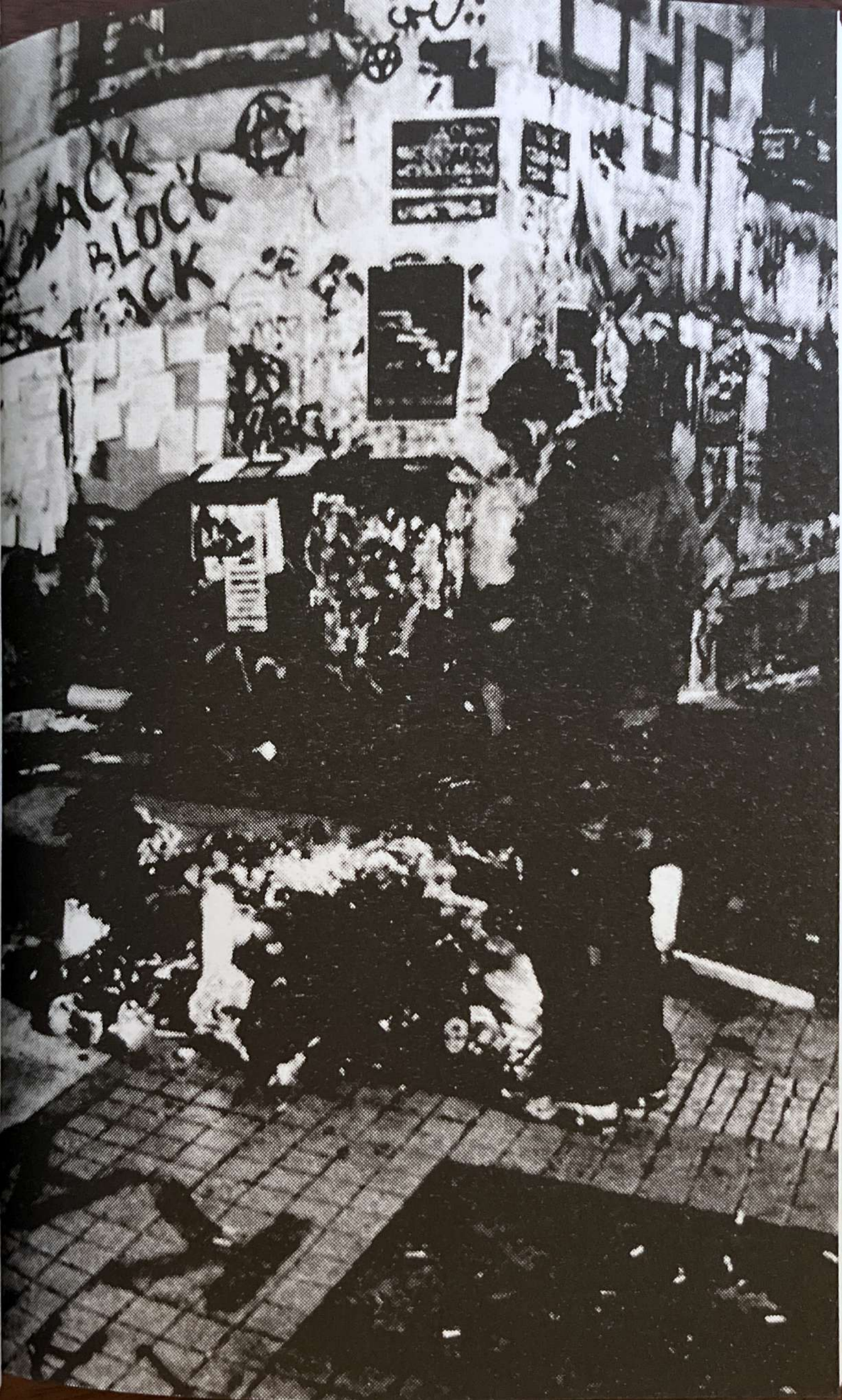
Sulphuric acid attacks aim for the face and this is anything but a coincidence. The face of the woman in patriarchy is laid through the antagonism around stereotypes of beauty. A woman has a public face to the extent that she is beautiful. When a woman tries to gain a face not for what she "is" but for what she does, she has to be put back in her place – the place of the private, the place of gender normality as defined by male sovereignty. Especially when her position as a cleaner incorporates, more than any, the "meaning" of her social gender as the non-productive, the family-gender, the passive, the reproductive. As the servant staff of those who "really work".

In the face of Kuneva the symbolisms of the woman, the migrant, the cleaner sprang up a movement opposite to their mirroring. The face attacked by the acid was one that attempted to gain materiality and meaning that went beyond accepted boundaries.

Kuneva perceived herself as a worker and as such she stormed the male castle of trade unionism. She therefore attacked subservience, the borders of her gender, of the domestic – challenging some of the roles upon which lays the contemporary barbarism. She turned herself into an enemy that must be eliminated, not as a physical presence but as a personality.

If the bosses wanted to kill her they would shoot her. If they wanted to terrorise her they would beat her up. They would treat her as an enemy that deserves to be punished equally – that is, as a man. Yet her burnt face is a symbol of things as they should be: the symbol of male order. The sulphuric acid will either lock her home or will turn her into a reminder of the consequences faced by any woman who questions this very order. This is the logic of the swines. And their hand was armed by the male view on things and the world. The world, that is, as it is now and as it should continue to be.

In the struggle against this world Konstantina is not alone.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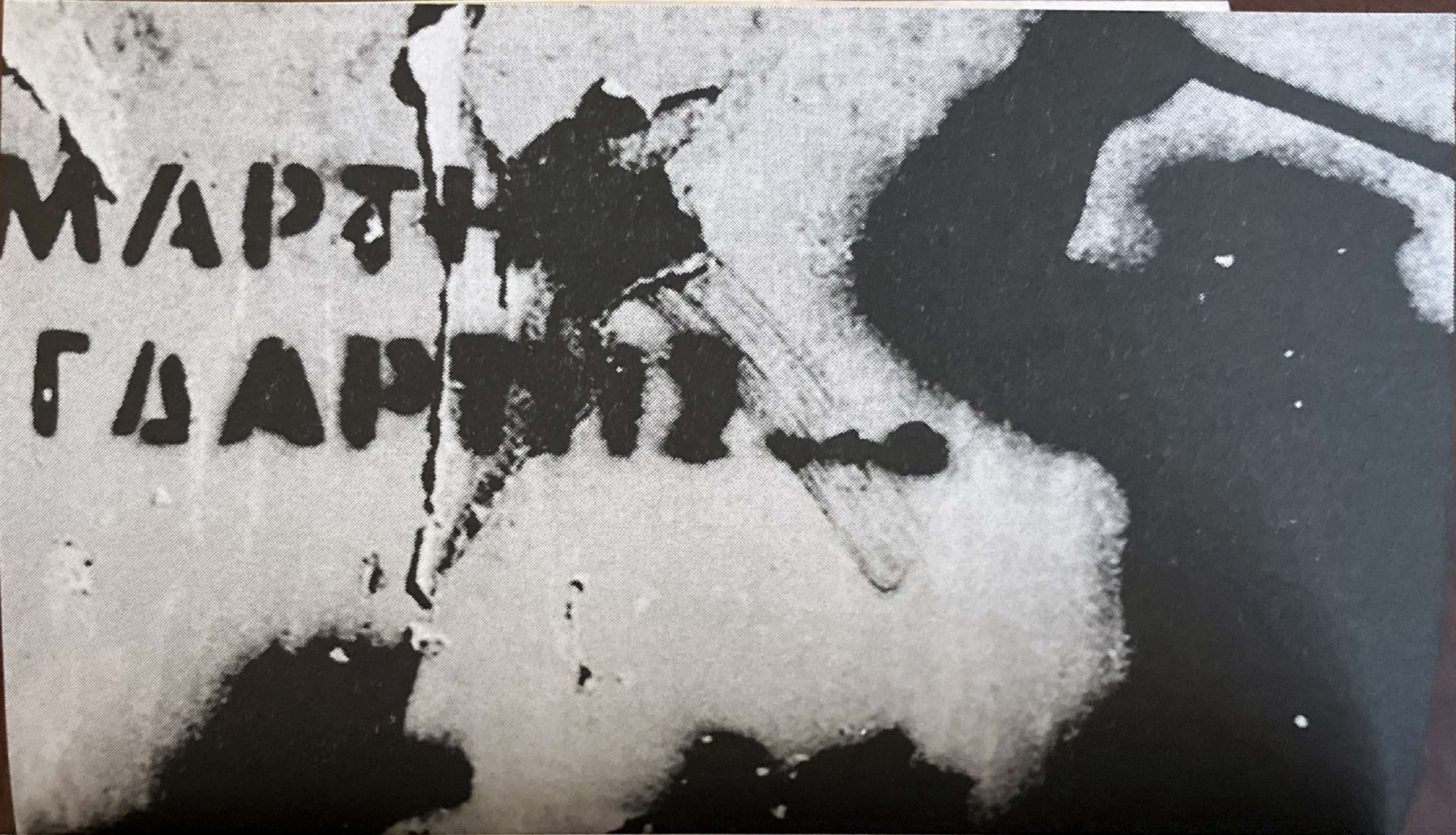
MARTIN
GUARDIA

# Part Three

## Analysis from TPTG

# The rebellious passage of a proletarian minority through a brief period of time

## The December rebellion and the post-rebellion developments as aspects of the crisis of capitalist relations in Greece

### An epochal crisis?

Since the mid 70's there has been a worldwide permanent crisis of reproduction of capitalist relations in all their forms (political, economic and ideological). As we understand it, this crisis has two aspects: it is a crisis of overaccumulation of capital, which means an inability, on the part of the capitalists, to increase the rate of exploitation and reduce the cost of constant capital and so increase the rate of profit demanded by an advancing capital accumulation; at the same time, it is a legitimization crisis, that is a crisis of the political and ideological forms that guaranteed the discipline of the labour power. We could speak about the inability of capital and its state to put forward a new global productive/social model that would replace the post war Keynesian deal, hard hit both by the struggles of the planetary proletariat and the capitalist policies against them.

During this long drawn out crisis of reproduction there have been periods of cyclical depressions. Capital in general has tried to deal with them in various ways: by changing the

global institutional and legal framework of the movement of capitals and "liberalising" the markets, by promoting a mixture of neoliberalism and keynesianism through war, by decreasing wages and institutionalising the precarisation of labour, by accomplishing new enclosures, by putting the "dangerous classes" under penal surveillance and/or integrating them into the credit system through a policy of "privatized Keynesianism".

Despite temporal recoveries, the ultimate failure of all the above strategies and tactics aimed at deferring the aggravation of the crisis has in the long run turned this crisis of reproduction into an epochal crisis, as many argue.

During the last two decades, the crisis of reproduction in Greece has been dealt with by capital and its state by successive reforms of the education and welfare system, by promoting the precarisation of work relations, by continuous legal attempts to discipline migrants and control the immigration flows, by cutting down allowances, wages and benefits and replacing them with bank loans. All these measures aimed at devaluing, disciplining and dividing the working class and making workers pay the cost of the reproduction of their labour power have not succeeded in decisively reversing the crisis to the advantage of capital –despite the fact that during the period between the mid 90's and the mid 2000's capital had managed to increase the rate of exploitation and expand its profitability.

In Greece the crisis of reproduction has manifested itself most explicitly as a crisis of legitimization of capitalist relations, either through the permanent crisis in education in the last 30

years [1] - or a lot more through the December rebellion. The rebellion was a clear expression of proletarian anger against a life that is getting more and more devaluated, surveilled and alienated. However, the December crisis cannot be directly connected with the recent depression that started manifesting itself in Greece in September 2008.

## The rebellion: Its class composition

We won't describe here thoroughly the various things that happened during the rebellion as we' ve done this elsewhere.[2] As far as the class composition of the rebellion is concerned, it ranged from secondary school students and university students to young, mostly precarious, workers from various sectors like education, construction, tourist and entertainment services, transportation, even media. (Of course, it's not always easy to distinguish students from precarious workers). As far as factory workers are concerned, there can be no accurate estimation about their individual participation in the riots, since no reports from such workplaces became known. Some of the students and the workers were second generation migrants (mostly Albanians, although there were also some migrants of other nationalities). There were also many older workers with more or less stable jobs, but they were rather a minority. Some of the students and the workers that participated in the riots are also football hooligans. Last, but not least, we have to mention

[1] The Permanent Crisis in Education at http://libcom.org

[2] See our chronology of the December events. http://de.indymedia.org/2009/01/238103.shtml

the participation of "lumpen" proletarians, like junkies, mostly during the first days of the rebellion. In general, it was precisely those segments of the class that have been experiencing directly the violence of the state surveillance and the deterioration of the work conditions that were more active in the rebellion. On the other hand, many older workers that had just started experiencing the so-called "financial crisis" (lay-offs, wage reduction etc) were very sympathetic towards the burning down of banks and state buildings, but were mostly passive.

It might be interesting to add that because of the motley composition of the multitude and its violence, a lot of politicos (even some organised anarchists) found it too "uncontrollable" and refrained themselves from what happened especially on the third day of the rebellion when violence reached its peak.

The high percentage of migrants in the rebellion demands some explanation. The influx of many Balkan migrants, especially Albanians, in the last twenty years has changed significantly the composition of the working class in Greece. At the same time, due to the immigration policy of the Greek capitalist state, a whole generation of young migrants, mostly Albanians, that were born or grew up in Greece are not considered to be Greek citizens. The legalization of all migrants is undesirable because, for capital and its state, migrants are only needed when they constitute an insecure, cheap and obedient workforce. The so-called process of "legalization", in Greece and other countries, has long been considered as necessary for capital and its state only in order to control and keep track of the immigration flows. That's why even second generation migrants can not easily get

a green card; on the contrary, they have to prove their "ability" to stay and work in the country every five years at most and of course they don't have the right to vote. Not to mention that their working conditions are the worst as far as wages and social security are concerned. But despite racism, of both social and state origin, most second generation migrants are quite well integrated, especially the Albanians who constitute the majority of the migrant population in general.

Second-generation young Albanians fitted very well with the rest of the native rioters. They felt more "comfortable" taking part in confrontations with cops, in attacks against state buildings and banks and in looting alongside young Greek proletarians than other migrants, mostly Asians and Africans who still live on the fringe, isolated in their ethnic communities. For the latter, it was easier and less risky to participate in the riots by looting or by frequenting the open National Technical University occupation in the centre of Athens where big communities of them live in areas resembling ghettos; when the riots erupted near "their" neighborhoods, that was the way they "contributed" to them. They received the most violent onslaught from both the police and the media propaganda. They were presented as "plunderers" and "thieves" and in some cases there were pogrom style attacks against them by fascists and undercover cops.

## The rebellion: Its character and content

The rebels who met in the streets and the occupations temporarily superseded their separated identities and roles

imposed on them by capitalist society since they met not as workers, university or school students or migrants but as rebels. They may not all have used a proletarian language, they may not have been able to go on strike, except for the secondary school and university students, but what they really did was to create proletarian communities of struggle against the state and capital. The spontaneous and uncontrolled character of the rebellion was proved precisely by the lack of any political or economic demands whatsoever, by a complete negation of politics and trade unionism. This proved to be the strength of the rebellion: the fact that it was impossible to be represented, co-opted or manipulated by political mechanisms that would make bargains with the state. The extra-parliamentary left organisations who participated in the occupation of the Faculty of Law tried to impose some political demands (ranging from disarmament of the cops and resignation of the government to granting interest-free mortgage loans) but found no reception.

Here we will quote from the first account of the rebellion which we wrote in late January: "Judging from the slogans and the attacks against the police, an overwhelmingly anti-cop sentiment was dominant during the days of the rebellion. The cop stood for power and particularly the brutality and arrogance of power. However, it was as symbols of a certain power - the power of money, the power to impose the exploitation of labour and deepen the class lines separating Greek society- that big stores, banks as well as state buildings (town halls, prefecture buildings, ministries) were attacked, burnt down or occupied. So, we could speak of a dominant and widespread anti-cop, anti-state, anti-capitalist feeling. Even the intellectuals of the

left acknowledged the class element of the rebellion and some mainstream newspapers admitted that "young people's rage" was not expressed only because of police violence. The cops were rather the most visible and crudest tip of an iceberg made of government corruption scandals, a security-surveillance state -armoured after the 2004 Olympics- that does not even hesitate to shoot in cold blood, a continuous attack on wages, an increase of working class reproduction costs through the gradual demolition of the previous pension and health system, a deterioration of work conditions and an increase of precarious jobs and unemployment, a load of overwork imposed on secondary school and university students, a tremendous destruction of nature, a glamorous facade consisting of abstract objects of desire in malls and on TV ads, obtainable only if you endure a huge amount of exploitation and anxiety. In the first days of the revolt you could almost smell all these reasons in the air and then a lot of texts, articles, leaflets followed, written both by insurgents or sympathizers and "commentators" to acknowledge that there was "something deeper". This "deeper thing" that everybody was talking about was the need to overcome the individual isolation from real, communal life [gemeinwesen], an isolation that all the above historical reasons have created".[3] Six months later, it is still important for us to lay emphasis on this last point because many comrades abroad think that the movement only attacked the cops and the institutions of control – the "tip of the

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[3] TPTG, Blaumachen Like a Winter with a Thousand Decembers at http://libcom.org. The french translation of this text is included in the book Les Emeutes en Grece (Senonevero, April 2009). It's interesting to note that the french term for riot (emeute) and emotion have the same root in the word emouvoir (to move).

iceberg". The rebellious experience was more than that. It was the common activity of an emerging subversive undercurrent that knows that, alongside the sphere of immediate production, school, family, consumption, politics, prison and the police do produce and reproduce classes. The rebellious experience, the material community of struggle against normalisation –when one deviant individual became the mediator of another deviant individual, a real social being– mediated emotions and thought and created a proletarian public sphere. This open sphere is the necessary pressuposition of the decisive moment of social subversion: the communisation of the means of production and intercourse. But this decisive moment, the point of no return, was never reached. After all, this was just the rebellious passage of a proletarian minority through a brief period of time and not a revolution. However, the feeling that there lay "something deeper" in all that, the idea that the issues raised by the rebels concerned everybody, was so dominant that it alone explains the helplessness of the parties of the opposition, leftist organizations, even some anarchists as mentioned before.

Here, just because secondary school and university students were such a significant subject of the rebellion, we should be more analytical about the load of overwork imposed on them that we mentioned before. Education, as the main capitalist institution that shapes, qualifies and allocates the labour-power commodity in a continuously developing capitalist division of labour, has been expanding in terms of student population since the 60's in Greece. This development has given rise to new "popular" demands, expectations, opportunities of social mobility and individual "successes". It

has also led to the accumulation of tensions and contradictions, frustrations and individual "failures" (also called "failures of the schooling system"). The mass production of expectations (and the corresponding rise in white collar proletarians and new petit-bourgeois strata in the 70's and the 80's) caused by the democratisation and expansion of education created an inevitable structural crisis in the hierarchical division of labour and a crisis of discipline and meaning in school; in other words, a legitimisation crisis that hard hit state education. No matter what you call this crisis –a "crisis of legitimacy", a "crisis in the selective-allocating role of education", a "crisis of expectations" or a "crisis in the correspondence of qualifications to career opportunities"– the truth is that education has been seriously crisis-ridden and, as the recent massive student movement of 2006-2007 had shown, this situation has exploded. It is possible to understand both that movement and the rebellion if we see them as expressions of the accumulated dissatisfaction that a whole generation of working class youth has been experiencing since the previous reforms in the 90's. These reforms were instrumental in imposing intensified work rates both in the school and in the realm of proper wage labour. This generation could not be stopped from expressing its discontent for a life that is increasingly characterised by insecurity and fear. At the same time, they revolted against an everyday activity that looks similar to any other kind of work. This revolt against student labour was given a boost by a significant number of students who already experience directly exploitation and alienation as proper wage labourers.

## Some forms of organization that came out of the rebellion

From the first day of the rebellion, three universities in the centre of Athens were occupied and were used effectively as "red bases" of the movement from which subversive actions were organised [4] and where rebels could seek refuge, if necessary. These occupations ended just before Christmas. In direct communication with these occupations, several local assemblies gradually appeared, linked to occupations of public buildings in some neighbourhoods. As we said in the text mentioned above: "In all these activities, the common new characteristic was an attempt to "open up" the rebellion towards the neighbourhoods. These assemblies were understood as "neighbourhood assemblies of struggle" or "people's assemblies", as they were called. In most cases, there appeared distinct tendencies inside this social "opening", particularly as the rebellion was simmering down. One tendency wanted to organise a community of struggle broadening the issues of the rebellion, another one preferred a kind of activity more orientated towards dealing with local matters on a steady basis. In the beginning, the assemblies looked pretty innovative and lively. There was not a formal procedure of decision making or majority rule and initiatives were encouraged. However, by the end of January, the occupations of buildings -whether public, union or municipal ones- did not flourish anymore... There was a lot of sympathy and interest for

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[4] Some of them –expropriations, acts of sabotage, etc– are mentioned in our chronology of the December events, see above.

[5] Like a Winter with a Thousand Decembers.

the insurgents but very little active involvement on the part of the "population". [5] Some of these assemblies are still going on but with less and less people involved, mainly activists. Their main interests nowadays are the expression of solidarity towards those prosecuted by the state and towards migrants, the defence of the occupied spaces in the city as well as the organisation of several activities connected to current struggles (e.g. the new anti-motorways movement).

## The spectacular separation of armed "struggle"

The need to mediate proletarian anger politically, even if it is to mediate it with an armed mediation, was not something that stemmed from the struggle itself but it was something that was being imposed on the struggle from the outside and afterwards. In the beginning, there were two attacks by the so-called "armed vanguard", one on the 23rd of December after the peak of the rebellion and one on the 5th of January, when the resurgence of the rebellion was at stake. From a proletarian point of view, even if these attacks were not organised by the state itself, the fact that after a month all of us became spectators of those "exemplary acts", that had not at all been part of our collective practice, was a defeat in itself. The "armed vanguard" evades admitting not only that they were not the first ones to target the police but also that no "armed vanguard", anywhere and ever, has managed to make the police literally disappear from the streets and to make individual cops not dare carry their official identities with them for a few days; they avoid admitting that they were surpassed by the movement. Claiming

that there is "a need to upgrade" violence, the so-called "armed vanguard" essentially tries to downgrade the socially and geographically diffused proletarian violence and violation of the law; the latter are the true opponents of the "armed vanguard" within the movement and as long as such practices go on no interventionism of "upgrading" things can find a fertile soil. It is on that basis that the armed struggle allies with the state: both are challenged by the proletarian subversive activity, the continuation of which constitutes a threat to the existence of both of them.

The proletarian subversive activity in the rebellion gained a temporary but not so superficial victory: an insubordination which weakened the security-surveillance state for a month and proved that we can change the power relations. This became possible since the rebels targeted the social relations in which they are forced to live, something that no "armed vanguard" has ever managed to do. Considering the range and the intensity of all the December events, the state repressive apparatus proved weak in practice. Since they had to deal with a delegitimisation of the institutions of control and not just bullets and grenades, the infamous zero tolerance became a simple tolerance towards the rebels' activities. The state counter-attack could actually only become successful in January when it made use of the "armed vanguard" operations: first, on an ideological level, by equating the state murder with the wounding of a riot police cop, thus relegitimizing the police and the security-surveillance state in general, and, second, on an operational level intensifying its repression. They even exploited the place of the attack (Exarchia), presenting the rebellion as a spectacular vendetta between cops

and "anarchists", as a grotesque and banal performance staged in a political ghetto.

As the rebellion was dying away, there was a notable proliferation of attacks against banks and state buildings by several groups, which cannot be placed in the same category as the "armed vanguard" "deeds", since most of them do not claim to be ahead of the actual movement (although they do not necessarily lack a voluntaristic, arrogant posture). However, the return of the "armed vanguard" proper with the execution of an antiterrorist-squad cop in early June, when even the memory of the rebellion had weakened, has given militarism and the escalation of pure violence a pretext to present themselves as an attractive alternative to a (small?) part of those who participated in the rebellion, if we are to judge by the political tolerance of the anti-authoritarian milieu towards this action. The limited class composition of the rebellion, its restricted extension beyond the level of the delegitimisation of the security-surveillance state and the gradual weakening of several communal projects in the centre and the neighbourhoods – mostly in Athens– led to the flourishing of a separated kind of blind violence as a dangerous caricature of "struggle" or rather a substitute. As certain important subjects of the rebellion were gradually leaving the stage (the secondary school students, the university students, the migrants), its social content got weaker and weaker and political identities became again strengthened as was the norm before. The "armed vanguard" violence is just one of these political identities, even in its naive and nihilistic form, appearing in an era of a generalized crisis of reproduction where the state and the capital are unable to offer any social

democratic type of "remedies" to heal the wounds of the rebellion. It's not important for us now to doubt the real identity of these hitmen with the ridiculous but revealing name "Revolutionary Sect"; what causes us some concern is the political tolerance of some quarters towards them, given the fact that it's the first time that in a Greek "armed vanguard's" text there's not one grain of even the good old leninist "for the people" ideology but instead an antisocial, nihilistic bloodthirst. The crisis of neoliberalism as a certain phase of the capitalist accumulation and legitimization crisis seems to lead to a deeper crisis (even to serious signs of social decomposition) and not to any signs of revival of reformism. Even the recent electoral failure of the governing party combined with the high percentage of election abstention (the highest ever in an excessively politicised country like Greece), which was an indirect result of the legitimisation crisis that the rebellion expressed and deepened, have not led to any concessions on the part of the state. With all its own limits, the rebellion made the limits of capitalist integration even more visible than before. The slogan "communism or capitalist civilisation" seems timely more than ever.

## The rebellion, the workplaces and the rank'n'file unions

To discuss the reasons why the rebellion did not extend to the places of waged labour –a question often asked by comrades abroad– we need first to be more analytical about certain segments of the proletariat. From our empirical knowledge, those workers who can be described either as "workers with a stable job" or non-precarious had a very limited participation in

the rebellion, if any. For those of them who actually took part in the rebellion, to try to extend it to their workplaces would mean engaging in wildcat strikes outside and against trade unions, since most strikes are called and controlled by them, although their prestige has been undermined for a long time now. In the last twenty years many strikes have been called in the public sector (education, public utility services, some ministries). These past struggles have revealed the workers inability to create autonomous forms of organisation and let new contents emerge beyond the trade unionist demands. As far as occupations of workplaces are concerned, such activities have taken place only in defensive struggles against closures or relocations, mostly of textile factories. But even those, as well as most strikes, in the previous years have by and large been defeated in meeting their demands. Besides all that, capitalism in Greece is characterised by a low concentration of capital with many small firms where less than ten people are employed and where almost no kind of unionism exists. One of the main subjects of the rebellion, thus, the precarious waged workers, who mainly work in such places, do not consider them to be a terrain of proletarian power and mobilization and in most cases they are not attached to their job. Possibly, it was precisely their inability or even unwillingness to mobilize there that made young precarious workers take to the streets. Moreover, like we said before, this first urban rebellion in Greece was, like all modern urban rebellions, a violent eruption of delegitimisation of capitalist institutions of control and, what's more, a short-lived experience of a communal life against separations and outside the workplaces –with the notable exception of the universities and the municipality of Agios Dimitrios. In the case of precarious workers, extending the rebellion to their workplaces would mean wildcats and

occupations and nothing less. Well, certainly, given the practical possibilities there and subjective disposition, such an extension was both unfeasible and undesirable.

However, many rebels realized these limits and tried to make such a leap. The occupation of the central offices of the General Confederation of Labour of Greece (GSEE) stemmed from this need as well as the need to undermine the media presentation of the rebellion as a "youth protest at the expense of the workers' interests". Besides, it offered an opportunity to expose the undermining role of GSEE itself in the rebellion. The initiative was taken by some members of the rank'n'file union of couriers who are mostly anti-authoritarians. However, during the occupation it became obvious that even the rank'n'file version of unionism could not relate to the rebellion. There were two, although not clear-cut, tendencies even at the preparation assembly: a unionist-workerist one and a proletarian one. For those in the first one the occupation should have had a distinct "worker" character as opposed to the so-called youth or "metropolitan" character of the rebellion while those in the second one saw it as only one moment of the rebellion, as an opportunity to attack one more institution of capitalist control and as a meeting point of high-school students, university students, unemployed, waged workers and migrants, that is as one more community of struggle in the context of the general unrest. In fact, the unionist-workerist tendency tried to use the occupation rather as an instrument in the service of the above mentioned union and the idea of an independent of political influences base unionism in general. This didn't work. That's why some of them remained there for just two days.

As far as the rest of the "independent" left unions are concerned, things were even worse. There was only one assembly of trade unionists in the Faculty of Law on the 10th of December where several left bureaucrats stressed the need of a "political prospect" in the rebellion, meaning a political and unionist mediation expressed in a list of mostly populist demands. They rejected any proposals of violent forms of action and pompously called for extraordinary general assemblies and agitation at the workplaces for a general strike after one week –needless to say that nothing of the sort was ever tried.

In January the media workers that had participated actively in the rebellion occupied the offices of the corporate journalists' trade union. The Union of Editors of the Daily Newspapers of Athens (ESIEA) is the main journalists' trade union in Greece. It includes journalists from the major Athenian newspapers many of whom are at the same time employers because they are TV-producers or they own newspapers, while it excludes those journalists who work with precarious contracts or are hired as "freelancers". The occupation of ESIEA focused broadly on two issues: the first was the work relations and the widespread precarity in the media industry as well as the fragmented form of union organisation of the media workers; the second was the control of information by the official media, the way the revolt was "covered" by them and how counter-information could be produced by the movement.

After the end of the occupation the same people created an assembly of media workers, students and unemployed which organised a series of actions at various workplaces against layoffs or attempted layoffs and "covered" demos and other activities

of the movement in a way that was against the dominant propaganda. Many members of this assembly are former students of the Faculty of Mass Media and Communication and took part in the students' movement against the university reform in 2006-07 while some of them had attempted to create a new union that would include all media workers in the past. Right now the workers of the media industry are organised in 15 different unions (photographers, journalists, cameramen, clerical staff etc). The idea is to create a union that will include all workers, regardless of their position, from cleaners to journalists, and their labour contract, from fulltime employees to "freelancers". Recently they tried to coordinate their activity with that of the laid off workers of the newspaper "Eleftheros Typos".

On the 22nd of December, in Petralona, an old working class neighbourhood of the city of Athens, a Bulgarian migrant cleaner, Kostantina Kuneva, the General Secretary of the Janitors Union (PEKOP-All Attica Union for Janitors and Home Service Personnel), was the victim of an attack by goons of the bosses using sulphuric acid while returning home from her workplace, a railroad station of the ISAP public utility (Athens-Pireaus Electric Trains). She was seriously wounded, losing the use of one eye and of her vocal chords and she is still in hospital. It's worth mentioning that she had also visited the occupation of GSEE since her previous activities had led her to a confrontation with the leadership of the confederation bureaucracy. The attack on Konstantina took place a couple of days after the end of the occupation of GSEE and that was one of the reasons why there was such an unprecedented mobilization of people. After the attack, a "solidarity assembly"

was formed which using direct action tactics organised a series of actions (occupation of the headquarters of ISAP, sabotage of the ticket machines so that the commuters could travel free, demos). The assembly, despite its internal divisions, played a vital role in inspiring a remarkable solidarity movement which grew up throughout Greece demanding not only the prosecution of the perpetrators and the instigators but also the abolition of subcontracting altogether. We should add here that outsourcing cleaning services has become the norm for public sector companies and that these companies do not hire cleaners any more. Contractors are now the employers of thousands of janitors, mainly women migrants, who clean hundreds of public utilities, hospitals, railroad stations, schools, universities and other public buildings. However, regarding the character of cleaning sector jobs, these were always precarious and until recently it was regarded as normal and natural for a woman to be a janitor or home service worker. Moreover, by equating subcontracting or precariousness in general with "slavery", the majority of this solidarity movement, mainly comprised of leftist union activists, is trying to equate certain struggles against precariousness –one of the main forms of the capitalist restructuring in this historical moment– with general political demands of a social-democratic content regarding the state as a "reliable" and preferable employer to private subcontractors and thus putting aside the question of the abolition of wage labour per se.

## The depression in numbers, the state strategies and the class

As we said in the beginning, in Greece the signs of the depression have become more evident since last year. In order to have a clearer idea of the signs and the consequences of the most recent phase of the crisis, some data concerning the situation of the working class is necessary.

According to Eurostat, the highest shares of the population living in households that had been in mortgage arrears were found in Greece. According to a research by the Bank of Greece in 2007, 6 out of 10 Greek households had been in mortgage arrears, 7 out of 10 had been in arrears with consumer loans, 1 out of 2 had been in debt with credit cards. Apart from credit, 7 out of 10 households had been in arrears with rent and 6 out of 10 had been in arrears with utility bills. The number of households on credit exceeds 51%, that means 2.15 millions are on some kind of credit. So it's evident that taking recourse to credit has started reaching its limits. As far as wages and unemployment are concerned, indices are also revealing. 50% of the waged get less than 1030 euros gross. The basic wage in Greece is the lowest one in west Europe (50% of the EE15 wages). Youth unemployment reached 25.7% in 2008 and as far as women are concerned, they are the most hard hit by unemployment in Europe. About 800.000 workers fall within the so-called 500 euro generation. 300.000 of them are "freelancers", 295.000 work part-time, 180.000 were officially unemployed in 2008 and 80.000 people were expected to join the state Stage programmes (extremely low paid jobs at the public or private sector without social security and which supposedly offer training) for the years 2008-9.

In the first quarter of 2009, the rate of growth in Greece was just above zero because of a decrease of investment of private capital and was stabilised there only through state investments. Due to the depression, 160,000 people have become redundant, and this figure is expected to rise to 300,000 mainly in small and very small firms.

In certain sectors now the situation is as follows:

In the shipping trade, a lot of sailors have not been paid while their wages will be frozen. The public sector workers will have their wages frozen too. In industry and in textile factories in particular, redundancies of permanent and contract workers, a shorter working week with less pay and delay of payment have become more and more common. In the construction sector there is a high rate of unemployment and a fall of 17% in production. Tourism, the sector with the biggest share in GNP, has already been hit with high rates of unemployment and a fall of 9% of tourist arrivals.

Although the situation is certainly bleak, workers' reactions have been less than moderate and certainly too weak to counter-attack the capitalist restructuring. There have been quite few mobilisations in response to the mass lay-offs, delay of payments or closures of companies, mostly short strikes or work stoppages in some factories. Quite a few occupations of factories or companies (in a paper mill, a telecommunications company and a furniture factory) were isolated and did not make contacts with other laid off workers; instead, the path of bilateral agreements between the workers and the company or the Ministry of Labour was preferred. It seems that in most cases the management of the depression/restructuring is of a

standard pattern: while precarious workers just get fired, those older workers agree to resign and wait for early retirement. Thus, no mass lay-offs are visible while the state "guarantees" these social expenses now only to announce again the "collapse of the social security system" later -a recurring state motto of the last twenty years- which would entail "new sacrifices" and so on so forth. However, such a trick can prove valuable for the state at the moment, since it can save time and postpone a generalised explosion. But for how long? And how many can be satisfied with such manoeuvres?

Actually, while the depression/restructuring is deepening and capital and the state reduce the direct and indirect wage, at the same time that they increase precariousness and lay-offs, they are trapped in a vicious circle whereby they are compelled to let the legitimization crisis deepen even more. At the same time, as the "war on terrorism" is still going on, trying to deal violently with the accumulated problems of the previous phase of neo-liberal war deregulation,[6] the Greek state that has troops in central Asia is currently "swamped" by floods of refugees that is a situation of its own making. Faced with the nightmare of a new December, fiercer this time as the crisis prolongs, and with the undesired masses of thousands of "surplus proletarians" from Asia and Africa, it has just one card to put on the table: the strengthening of its repressive mechanisms which triggered the December rebellion and created the dangerous mixture of both native and migrant riots in the first place! However, its recourse to discipline and the intensification of its zero tolerance

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[6] See our text, The War on Terror (2003), at http://libcom.org/library/war-terror

dogma is inescapable since no social democratic strategies for the extended reproduction of the proletariat can be proposed anymore. Selling "security" to natives against "invading" foreigners used as scapegoats, has been the only "social offer" on the part of the state. Indeed, new divisions are on the agenda through the creation of new "folk devils" and "moral panics".

In the beginning of March, after a cop got killed during an armed robbery, many high-ranking police officers warned of a rapid increase in armed robberies since January (almost 40 each month) attributing this both to the release of many convicts, as a measure to relieve the congestion in prisons, and the "disruption" caused in December.

It was then that the launching of new repressive laws, passed just recently, started being discussed. First, in order to "protect police prestige", an old legislation, introduced during the dictatorship in the 30's, was put in practice again against the crime of "defamation of authority". The famous slogan of the rebellion "Cops, killers, pigs" can now lead ex-officio up to a two-year imprisonment. A second law targeting the December rebels refers to the "faking of one's facial features", in practice meaning the use of hooded outfits. Together with the formation of new police forces and more regular patrols, these acts aim to be more than a counter-attack on the favourite symbols of the rebellion. The demonisation of the "hooded rioters", starting with anti-authoritarians and anarchists, increases separations among the rebels and between the rebels and the rest of the proletarians who remained passive during the rebellion. If the penalties imposed were not that serious, one could be tempted

to laugh at the furious effort of the state to deal with a social rebellion on the level of its slogans and dress code!

Exploiting the generalised sense of social insecurity that the capitalist crisis itself has created, the second "enemy" fabricated by the state are the refugees and illegal migrants that suffocate in the "hybrid ghetto" of Athens. The repression mechanisms do know that a large part of the revolting multitude that took over the Athens' streets those December days and nights and again in May during a Muslim small-scale riot consisted of migrants hailing from the nearby neighbourhoods. This "ghetto", mainly situated within the historical inner city, resembles the American ghettos, in aspects such as the "vertical segregation" among inhabitants, in other words the non-uniform social character, or the policies of deliberately running down an area in order to encourage people to leave. It also resembles the west-European working-class suburbs, in aspects such as the multi-racial/ethnic mixture. The above mentioned similarities, or analogies, should of course be treated with caution, especially due to the rather large scale differences. A media barrage full of passionate articles and heart-breaking TV reportage, focusing on the environmental and financial degradation of the inner city neighbourhoods, which was mostly related to the uncontrolled/ unorganised housing of thousands of illegal migrants, the presence of junkies, prostitutes and other "lumpen" proletarians, signaled the first phase of this new warfare. It should be noted though, that this media barrage had started a bit before December's uprising.

The second phase was far more direct and violent. Physical attacks on migrants and people supporting them by members of

a neo-nazi group were coupled with massive arrests by the police which led to imprisonments and deportations. Local assemblies of right-wing "indignant citizens" and petit-bourgeois merchants, organised by the only parliamentary ultra-right wing party, have protested against the presence of migrants in their neighbourhoods and have even taken direct action against them, such as the blockade of a local playground, where lots of migrant children used to play while their parents hung around. Moreover, under the pretext of "public health protection" lots of old and/or abandoned buildings in the inner city area where thousands of migrants are lodged had been registered and then evacuation orders were issued. Here, the constant "clean sweep operations" against migrants and "lumpens" in the centre of Athens, must also be seen as an effort to gentrify those areas in the "historical centre" that still remain "undeveloped" and resist turning into expensive, sterile, museum-like non places, like in most west-european cities.

Apart from all these, the Greek government has also announced that it plans to construct 11 "concentration camps" all over the country, similar to those already established in Italy, where arrested migrants will be detained while waiting for their deportation. Quite recently, it has passed new legislation whereby the length of detention for illegal migrants until deportation is raised to 6 or 12 months and any foreigner who is charged with committing a crime that carries a prison sentence of three months or more can be deported immediately, classified as "dangerous for public order and safety".

The recent speech by the Greek prime minister, who linked "criminality" to "illegal" migrants and "hooded rioters", points to

a continuation of the –already failed– neoliberal management of the crisis; the reinvention and demonisation of the "dangerous classes" is to be used as a weapon for the further division and discipline of the proletariat in order to accept the deterioration of its living conditions because of the restructuring. However, the list of "criminals" may broaden dangerously and include in near future those who were just "sympathetic" towards the rebels in December. Since the "social contract" has been breached, but no return to the previous social democratic strategies appears on the horizon, the capitalist social relation cannot be adequately reproduced and maybe those "sympathisers" will have a million reasons to prove right the fears of the planetary bosses about the December rebellion as a prelude to a generalised proletarian explosion in the course of the global crisis of reproduction.

*TPTG*
*June 30th 2009*

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Additions :

*For some sense of conclusion we asked TPTG a final few questions about the uprising.*

*- What was the relationship between the political activists (anarchos etc.) and the mass of people who were drawn into the struggle by more immediate concerns?*

The relationship between the politicised minority and the "ordinary people" was surely affected by the fact that the politicized minority had the quick reflexes to be the first in the streets in the first two days (Saturday-Sunday), even if there were other people as well. For obvious reasons, activists were organisationally in better trim than 'ordinary people' to actually trigger the rebellion. Especially the insurrectionists were more familiar with riot strategies, such as making barricades and fighting with the police, something that gave them the lead in the first two days. That's why, the activists were the first to take the initiative for the organization of occupations both in the 4 occupations of the city centre (Polytechnic School, Law School, ASOEE and GSEE) and in the occupations in the suburbs (Agios Dimitrios, Chalandri).

Nevertheless, we may say that, in general, during the riots there was no separation among the people that participated in the conflicts with the police. This can be explained by the class composition of the greek rebellion: secondary school students have a long tradition of school occupations that goes down to younger ones; university students have also a 'legacy'

of struggles (and recently, quite violent ones), football hooligans, drug addicts, a lot of migrants all share a culture of delinquency and, at least an anti-cop mentality, and, of course, the anti-authoritarian milieu can be seen as the delinquent social segment par excellence - necessary prerequisites for a rebellion. Of course, when the violence escalated on Monday evening there were many activists that felt that what was happening was "out of (their) control" and too extreme. This sense of 'being surpassed' by the situation (which gradually became more generalised) was the natural outcome of the abolition of the role either of the 'riot specialist' or the 'political avant-guard' felt on a personal level. When everyone riots, the 'ritual rioters' or the 'revolutionaries' have no distinguishable position anymore.

On Monday, a full-scale looting of shops in the centre of Athens took place but there was no reaction against that in the streets. From the start, many migrants and marginalized youth frequented the Polytechnic School and this drove some people to move to ASOEE because of the chaotic situation there. The marginalized proletarians were especially oriented to loot nearby stores and this began to be problematic for most of the anarchists there after Tuesday. So, they organised the repression of such actions near the Polytechnic School on the grounds of 'anti-consumerism' and regarding it as a non-political act, an end in itself, which did not contribute to the fight against the police. Besides, there were also some practical problems since some people brought the looted merchandise inside the occupation and fought over its distribution. The assembly of Polytechnic school was to a great extent controlled by the anarchists since most of the migrants didn't even speak Greek.

As far as life in occupations is concerned, we may say that, apart from the peculiarities of the Polytechnic School because of its special composition, in most of the other occupations a community of struggle was really formed without exclusions, even if the initiative was taken by the "activists". So it can be said that a supersession of "separated identities" really happened. The traditional schema of representation and vanguardism didn't work this time, and we think that this is also the case for the Law School where many left groups participated. In the occupation of GSEE the workerist-base unionist tendency tried to enforce a workers' identity and to exclude other proletarians but their attempt failed at large because of the reactions of the "base".

Of course, as the revolt was running out of steam and the days were passing there was a gradual re-emergence of separated identities. From then on, most activities were organised by activists and the usual manipulation techniques came into full force once again.

*- How did the movement end?*

You are right in your consideration that the movement just ran out of steam. This is connected with the fact that it was a minority proletarian movement characterized by the distinct tradition of struggles of its different 'delinquent' parts. After more than 2 weeks of riots and occupations most of the people got really tired and the only way to continue would be the spreading out of the revolt in other parts of the proletariat. But this was not possible because of the passive attitude of the

part of the working class that did not participate in the revolt. This also explains why the revolt didn't spread to the workplaces as well as why the occupations in the neighborhoods stopped after some time, although most of the squatters thought that this could possibly be another way of extending the struggle. Also, in other cities outside of Athens the "web of control" is much stronger since we are talking about small communities with a fairly big petit-bourgeoisie of shop-owners and farmers as well as more stringent family bonds. That was the reason why the events there were not as big and didn't last for so long (except for some big cities like Thessaloniki, Patra and Heraclio). Among the external limits of the rebellion cited so far, we should not also omit the ideological use the state made of the vanguard armed struggle acts. The state tried to relegitimize itself and in particular its repressive mechanism reversing the roles and playing the part of the victim. At the same time its repression affected the most vulnerable subjects of the rebellion: the migrants (the number of migrants deported or sent to prison is still unknown) and the secondary school students. Therefore, as gradually the rebellion was weakened (when the secondary school students and the migrants left the stage –the two most prominent groups of the rebellion), the internal limits (the limited creative initiatives among the rebels themselves) became more visible and decisive.

56a Infoshop is a radical bookshop and social centre active in South London since 1991


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'Everyone to the streets' was the call put out through the TV and radio occupations but also during the theatre occupations.

> *"The premiere of the national theatre in Athens was interrupted by around one hundred people tonight – they took the stage and held out a banner reading "everyone to the streets". The text distributed to the audience and actors read, among others: "now that you've deactivated your mobile phones, it's about time you activated your consciousness". Once hitting the streets, the crowd quickly formed an impromptu demonstration through central Athens – by the time we had reached Omonoia Square, our number had doubled and seemed enough to scare off the ten or so Zeta force policemen (motorcyclists) who drove off at our sight. The cast and director refused to continue the play, in solidarity with our struggle. Yesterday, a similar action took place at the Athens concert hall."*

To this day people in Greece continue to take it to the streets. The struggle continues...

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Riots in response to cop murders are not so unusual, but the response to the fatal shooting of Alexis Grigoropoulos on 6th December 2008 rapidly developed into a much wider movement which expressed itself in an incredible variety of activities, from looting shops and attacking police stations to occupying radio stations, and led to a general questioning of many different aspects of capitalist society by the revolting proles.

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